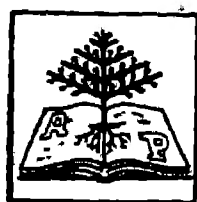

M. N. ROY'S MEMOIRS

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M. N. ROY'S MEMOIRS

Part 1

In Search of an Ideal

The Ambassador was visibly amazed, and tried to mollify me. He suggested that I must immediately proceed to Berlin to submit the plan for the consideration of the Supreme War Lord and his General Staff. While bidding farewell, he asked: "Tell me, young friend, do you really believe that you will be able to rule your country without foreign help and advice?" I snapped back: "Well, don't you think that the privilege of helping us in future should be earned by helping us to win freedom?" He laughed away his dismay, wished me luck and asked another question: "How many young men like the one I have just met are there in India?" I replied with honest modesty that I was a solitary representative of a very large party of such revolutionaries.

death must be avenged. Only a year had passed since then. But in the meantime I had come to realise that I admired Jatinda because he personified, perhaps without himself knowing it, the best of mankind. The corollary to that realisation was that Jatinda's death would be avenged if I worked for the ideal of establishing a social order in which the best in man could be manifest. In other words I could turn my back on the old mission without the guilty conscience of betraying a trust, because a new one appealed more strongly not only to my emotion, but also to my intelligence. Otherwise, disappointment and disgust might have persuaded me to end a life of adventures with the end of a mission.

who was the foremost pacifist in America at that time. Now it was high time to clear out. But how to dodge the police in a country where the coloured man could be so easily spotted? The methods successfully practised at home would be of no avail. One must simply take the chance. Reckless daring was the only possible method. The obvious thing to do at first was to change the place of residence. I selected a crowded locality; while shifting to the new lodging, I could detect no surveillance. Was it then a bluff? It would not be wise to tarry. The sleuths might have lost the track, and may pick it up presently. So, one evening I left the new lodging and went to a restaurant. After dinner, I went out by another door, hailed a passing taxi and made for the railway station. Previously, I had informed myself that late in the evening a train left for the border-town of San Antonio. The train passed through several southern States, but I encountered no difficulty on account of my brown skin. On the third day noon, the train reached the frontier station. It was blazing hot; when I left New York was blanketed with snow. A few last-minute difficulties were overcome with sheer brass, and I was over the Rio Grande, laughing heartily for having called the American bluff.

of the national dishes. In Hotel Geneva, I ordered two others I knew of — *tamales* and *Chile con carne*. The waiter, a Mexican himself, looked at me in surprise, and said that he could serve those dishes only out of tins made in U.S.A., either by Libby's or Heinz's, famous for their fifty-seven varieties. I was more surprised in my turn, and asked why Mexican dishes were served out of tins made in U.S.A. The waiter replied, because "none of the guests eats native food." I changed my order, and demanded a beefsteak.

Mexican Memoranda

I DID NOT know a single soul in Mexico; nor had I tried to make any contact before coming there. Although in a short time I came to like the country and its people immensely, and felt myself almost at home, my going there was not a deliberate choice. Not willing to spend time in an American prison and thereafter be deported to India where a much heavier sentence awaited my return, I had to get out of the United States. My attempts to cross the Atlantic having not succeeded, I had to choose between Canada and Mexico as the only possible escape. In the former country, I would be under the jurisdiction of the long arm of British law. To choose Mexico was, therefore, a forced move. I left in a hurry.

But on arriving there, I did not feel helpless; there was something in the atmosphere. The letter of introduction to General Alvarado was the point of departure of my search for that something in a concrete form. I knew that the General was the Governor of the far-off State of Yucatan; but I did not know that the place was practically inaccessible from Mexico City. There was no railway connection. Travelling on land, a distance of about a thousand miles, one must, in the last lap of the journey, pass through the wilderness of the large States of Tabasco and Chiapas, both marshy and mountainous. The usual route was across the Gulf of Mexico; but the ships were mostly American; leaving from the Mexican port of Veracruz, they, as a rule, called either at some American Gulf port or Havana. I must keep away from both. Some Mexican ships went direct; but mostly they were small and not seaworthy. They seldom carried passengers.

General Alvarado? I had it with me; but it was sealed. Without the least hesitation on that, the Minister tore the cover and read the letter. I noticed a smile of satisfaction on his face. I was informed that General Alvarado was expected at the capital any day, and the Ministry would inform me as soon as he arrived. I thought the interview was over, and I got up to go.

The Minister also got up, and with the classical Spanish gesture of politeness, which the Mexican gentleman does so superbly, requested me to sit down; before I left, he wanted to assure me that I was very welcome and safe in the Republic of Mexico. The word safe struck me; he must have noticed some expression on my face, or perhaps wanted to be dramatic, as all conventionally cultivated Mexicans are prone to be. "My honourable colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has received some intimation about you. But, Sir, that is a diplomatic secret, which I should not divulge. I only wanted to reassure you that you are in a country which has fought for freedom ever since the days of Hidalgo and Juarez. You are free and safe here." This time, he got up first, and with a demonstration of dignity, almost majestic, walked ahead of me to the door, the much too long sheathed sword trailing on the thick carpet, held it ajar with his own hand, to bow me out.

The whole affair looked like a scene out of a comic opera. Out in the corridor, and then in the street, I tried to take in the significance of the dramatic experience. It made a profound impression on me. Evidently, the *Crown Prince*, as the Chief of the army was banteringly called (President Carranza had no son) knew about me, and the knowledge about the arrival of an obscure foreigner had reached him through the diplomatic channel. It gave me a feeling of international importance. But the more important part of the experience was the feeling that I was amongst friends, I did not have to wait long to have the feeling reinforced.

The next day, I received a letter from the editor of one of the leading dailies of the city, said to be the non-official mouth-piece of the Government, very politely enquiring if I would care to call at his office. The letter contained an explanation for the impropriety of the request; because I was staying in an undesirable place, the writer would not call on me.

I felt that the plot was thickening. It was an intriguing situation, and it seemed that more interesting and exciting experiences awaited me. It was hardly a week since I had come to a new place, a complete stranger, acquainted with not a single soul. But already I was given to understand that I had friends in high quarters. It was an experience which might have resurrected my belief in Providence, had I not been a born sceptic.

However, at the appointed time, I called at the office of *El Puchlo* (The People) and met the editor, a tall, rather heavily set man, well beyond the middle age. His behaviour was grave and paternal. He might have a grandson of my age. I liked it for a change from the pompous effusiveness of the previous interview. But that was a Cabinet Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, and this only a journalist, although the latter might be of more consequence in a democratic order.

After the preliminary exchange of politeness, which was free from the usual Mexican extravagance, the editor once again begged to be pardoned for not calling on me: "You are guest in our country, and we Mexicans are a hospitable people, although they say," he added, rather in irony than in bitterness, "that we are backward." I took up the cue and replied: "Well, Sir, we are in the same boat; my country is similarly stigmatised by the arrogant imperialism of the White race." The quiet composure of the elderly man inspired confidence. I did not know how it happened; but before I left his office after a couple of hours, he knew my whole story, and the sincerity of his sympathy was palpable. "We shall meet again," he said. "Often; but you must move out of the hotel. It is not a safe place for you." It was an intriguing remark, but we would say no more, and I felt as it were in paternal presence which enjoined respect, if not obedience. Before I left, he invited me to dinner at his home and meet his wife. In the meantime, he would find a more suitable place for me to stay.

A few days later, I moved out of the Hotel de Geneva to a small house in the respectable residential part of the city called *Colonia Roma*. But during the last days of my stay in the hotel, I had another unexpected experience which led to a resumption

of old relations. I had noticed that the guests in the hotel divided themselves in two groups. There were actually two dining rooms. On some discrete enquiry, I came to know that a number of Germans lived in the hotel. Most of them had come from the Far East or the United States. On their arrival, the hotel became a battle-ground. The Anglo-American residents took it for their territory, and would not tolerate the presence of enemy aliens. But Mexico was a neutral country; the Germans stood their ground. The patriotism of the Canadian proprietor would not go to the extent of losing a considerable business and perhaps provoke intervention of the authorities, by turning the Germans out. Ingeniously, he divided the hotel practically into two, each part allotted to one of the warring groups. As a British subject, I was accommodated in the allied part. But after the first day's experience, of being told that no native food was served there, I stopped going to the common dining room and ordered meals served in my room. Nor did I frequent the hotel lounge and drawing rooms. My exclusiveness must have been noticed and the behaviour of all the fellow-guests was naturally frigid. Even the host appeared to avoid me.

Until I discovered Mexico, it was a rather disagreeable situation. Therefore, one day after lunch, when everybody retires for siesta, I was rather surprised by a gentle knock at my door. The surprise was greater when I opened the door to find one of the German boarders whispering if he could come in. He was in before I could say anything. He profusely apologised for the intrusion; but he had an important message to deliver, and must not be seen by any of those on the other side while speaking to me. While he spoke in an earnest low voice, I identified him as one of the "poached eggs" who always amused me — an inseparable pair of men living in the German part of the hotel, very short, dressed similarly; their soft cloth hats somehow reminded me of poached eggs. I wondered where the other one was! After a couple of minutes, while letting out my visitor I found his counterpart at the far end of the corridor, evidently keeping watch.

It was all very conspirative, reminiscent of the good old days at home. The message was that two friends I had met in Java

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Mexican Days

IN THE evening, I went to the appointed place. It was a street in the residential part of the city—quiet, well-paved, clean, lined with trees on both sides. The evenings in Mexico City are delightful. I walked leisurely, breathing in deeply the invigorating air blowing gently from the snow-clad volcanoes. But my mind worked feverishly, crowded with the memory of the strange experience of the last days and hours. I was somewhat dazed, wondering what was going to happen next. A huge touring car overtook me with uncanny silence and pulled up. A door was thrown open noiselessly and I climbed into the front seat by the side of the man at the wheel. When the car moved, I turned my head backwards to see if there was anybody else in. The *Poached Eggs* sat there, half sunk in the thickly upholstered capacious seat. Not a word was uttered by anybody. It was a short drive to the place where the man at the wheel got out and motioned me to follow him. The *Poached Eggs* were left in the car.

The door right on the street opened noiselessly as we approached it. Immediately, we were in a well-furnished reception hall. My companion threw off the thick coat he was wearing, rather unnecessarily, to be caught dexterously by a liveried attendant, and tossed his naval officer's cap on a chair. He was a bulky, broad-shouldered man of early middle-age, with greying flaxen hair and steel blue eyes. On the whole an impressive figure. He pushed open a door, stepped aside with a military gesture, and stiffly bowed, an invitation for the visitor to enter. It was a long, rather low-ceilinged room, walls panelled with dark well-polished wood, the floor covered with thick carpets.

Captain, who had, in the meantime, won the coveted Iron Cross for some unknown meritorious service to the Fatherland, asked me for a detailed account of the plan which I wanted to submit to the General Staff. He gave the reason for his inquisitiveness: Geheimrat (the Kaiser's Privy Councillor) von so and so was soon coming to Mexico with plenipotentiary powers for an overall review of the activities of the diplomatic and secret agents in the American cities and the Far East. The supreme authorities in Berlin would then issue orders for the execution of the recommendations in his report. I was duly impressed by the confidence, and outlined the plan in which I was no longer much interested. All the three were outraged by the news that the agencies in China had failed to appreciate the importance of my plan and render me the necessary help which they thought was paltry.

After some animated conversation amongst themselves in German, which I did not know then, the naval Captain asked me why I did not proceed to Berlin from New York. But how could I have? "I would have taken you on the *Deutschland* in her first return voyage." I keenly felt a loss — not so much of the chance of going to Berlin as of the thrill of travelling on the famous submarine which crossed the Atlantic thrice, defying the blockade. But how could I get in touch with him? Why, through the Embassy! The idea had not occurred to me, but the latter must have thought of it when I was waiting for a chance to cross over with such an important mission.

So, my failure to test to the end the sincerity and seriousness of the German offer to help the liberation of India was due to the oiliness of the leader in New York. I kept the bitter thought to myself; it could not be shared with foreigners. I had lost confidence in them. There was something fishy about the queer occupants of the mysterious house in New York. But I could not imagine that the impostor was deceiving me, and anything about the plan; but he knew that he was betraying the cause he pretended to represent. Of course, I had not told him anything about the plan; but he knew that I had come all the way from India and wanted to proceed to Berlin with an important message to the Indian Revolutionary Committee.

the sound of the language, as I really did. *La Mujer Moderna* was doing most of the talking. She walked up and down the room, waiving the black cigarette held in a hairpin, to brush aside any attempt of the young man to put in a word now and then.

Before we left, the host took me aside to ask if I would contribute a series of articles to *El Pueblo* about the British rule in India. "You know ours was also a colonial country: our forefathers revolted and the Mexican people overthrew the Spanish rule. Unfortunately, even after a century, Mexico is not yet really free. We are still waging the war of independence. Therefore, Mexicans sympathise with you, and would be benefited by a knowledge of your country and the struggle of its people for freedom. We are also Indians, you know, I am of the pure blood." I looked at him automatically — a dark handsome, intelligent face, which could belong to any Indian of the best type. I agreed to write the articles, but pointed out the fact of my ignorance of the Spanish language. He consolingly reassured me that I would get over the difficulty in no time; meanwhile, the young man who called at my place in the morning would translate the articles. Thus he was appointed my private secretary. The next morning he presented himself to enquire when my first article for *El Pueblo* would be ready for translation: and simply informed me that he was going to purchase a new typewriter: Oliver was the make most popular throughout Latin America. I felt that events were being pushed by some unseen hand. Once again, the faith in a divine providence, almost overwhelmed by my commonsense, counselled caution pending further developments.

But it seemed that Providence was determined to regain my allegiance. In the afternoon, Senor Fernandez, the brother of the Foreign Minister, whom I had met the previous evening, turned up to say that his bank had been instructed by one of its clients to pay me ten thousand pesos. The peso was the unit of Mexican currency worth fifty per cent of the American dollar, and Mexican currency was the soundest at that time. The Carranza Government had abolished paper money; the currency was the silver peso, and five, ten, twenty peso gold coins. I got all that information from my new friend, the bank employee.

The next day a peon from the bank came to deliver a bag of twenty peso gold pieces against a receipt. The Providence was good and kind indeed, although my flagging faith could not be reinforced by the sight of glittering gold delivered on my doorsteps, so to say, without my asking for it.

Socialism in Mexican Politics

IN MY time there were no political parties in Mexico. Numerous groups struggled for political powers; but they all centred around individuals, mostly military men. Madero, who led the revolution of 1911, was the only civilian to become President of the Republic for a short time. Most rebels or leaders of revolutions, however, issued programmatic proclamations, appealing to the people to rally under their respective banners. Some solution of the agrarian problem figured prominently in each proclamation. Distribution of land was the common solution.

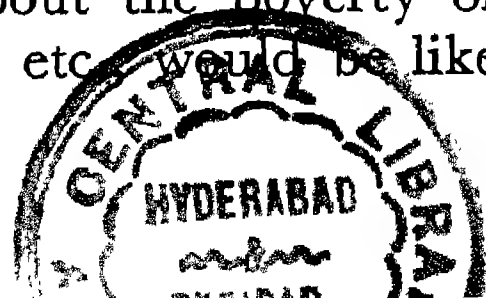
Ninety per cent of the people lived on land under feudal conditions. General poverty of the rural masses and perennial unemployment of a large number of land labourers made soldiering an attractive profession. Consequently, any movement against the established regime took the form of a military rebellion, and opposition leaders were either military men or called themselves Generals whose appeal would find a greater response from would-be soldiers. And the latter, being land-hungry peasants or unemployed agricultural workers, were more strongly attracted by the promise of land distribution.

Years of civil war, and the practice of rebel leaders, including some major ones, degenerating into sheer banditry, had disgusted the progressive and democratic sections of the middle-class. They also keenly felt the need for a radical agrarian reform, but kept away from the armed struggle for military supremacy carried on by politically ambitious Generals. The terms 'revolution' and 'revolutionary' had fallen in disrepute. The disgust and apathy of the bulk of the educated middle-class precluded the rise of any political party.

to the office of the Socialist Party, and actually bearded the lion in his den. The modest home of Ignazio Santibanez was the office of the party. He wore a longish black beard streaked with grey, presumably to impersonate the Prophet of Socialism. On my introducing myself as a foreigner interested in the revolutionary social movement, he enquired if I was the author of those very excellent articles in *El Pueblo*. (The use of extravagant adjectives is a feature of the Spanish language — a manner of speaking not to be taken literally.) What to say in those articles was a problem for me. I had solved it to my benefit; now I discovered that the articles also served the purpose of my introduction to the critical and really progressive section of the reading public of the city. 923.254

While thinking about what to say in those articles, I recollected the scene in the meeting addressed by Lala Lajpat Rai in New York. On the other hand, I remembered that the new educated middle class people I had met during the short time since my arrival in Mexico, pretended to be eager to know more about *la India misteriosa* than the sort of things I wanted to say. My tentative attempt to suggest that India was rather a land of drabness and poverty than of dream and beauty had failed to arouse much interest. R888M

Until then, my acquaintance with the Mexican educated middle-class was mostly confined to the courtiers of *La Mujer Moderna*. The attitude of a small group should not be generalised. But I had already got a vague impression that the politically indifferent section of the educated middle-class was nevertheless pro-Allies, because of their loyalty to the French cultural tradition. To sympathise with anti-British sentiment appeared to them as a betrayal of their cultural loyalty. That was reminiscent of the American Liberals refusing their press and platform to Lajpat Rai with the argument that any propaganda against the British was helping Germany. However, I did not see any sense in doing anti-British propaganda in a country which could help India little even if it were convinced of the justice of her case. Moreover, the spectacle of poverty of the Mexican people was no less grim than that of the Indian. To tell the Mexican all about the poverty of India and its cause, British exploitation, etc. would be like



blooded proletarians. Every one of them present was a fine type of the Mexican of mixed blood. Santibanez explained that it was not a formal meeting of the Committee; they had assembled to meet me. I expressed my thankfulness and the hope of being of some service to the common cause. Instinctively, as a gesture of apology for my non-proletarian appearance, I must have looked at my own clothes. A jovial looking man of middle age, with a shock of wavy black hair, which made him look rather fierce, came up to me, placed his hands on my shoulders, and said: "We don't mind your clothes; all of us would like to be so dressed." All laughed cheerfully and gathered around me, obviously to make the embarrassed visitor feel quite at home and among friends. I did feel like that.

When we were about to disperse, I diffidently enquired from Santibanez if we all could not go to a nearby place to have coffee. To my great relief, the invitation was accepted. We went to *El Chino* — the Chinaman's small restaurant, which subsequently came to be the birthplace of the first Communist Party outside Russia. I mean, where the idea of founding it was conceived a year later. For weeks and months, I had to match my Marxism with the passionately anarchist and fanatically syndicalist convictions of the leaders of the Socialist Party. Usually, our discussions lasted until dawn, and then we went to *El Chino*. The owner woke up, pretending to be annoyed and angry; but without fail produced coffee and hot cakes for our breakfast.

The memorable battle between marxism and anarcho-syndicalism began with our first visit to *El Chino*. Some other guests were engaged in a heated discussion. A newspaper was passing from hand to hand. Santibanez explained that the evening papers carried the sensational news that the dispute between Mexico and the U.S.A. on Article 17 of the *Querretanro Constitution*, which declared that all underground riches were the property of the nation, had reached a stage where it could not be settled peacefully; that the danger of American armed intervention was, therefore, imminent. As we had not touched any political question the whole evening, I asked what would be the attitude of the Socialist Party, if the danger materialised and what was proposed to do to prevent

it, if possible. The Secretary intervened with great vehemence: "What has the proletariat to do in the quarrel between two bourgeois governments? We are indifferent." If the danger of intervention developed into a war, threatening the independence of Mexico, could they still be indifferent. The reply given by all in a chorus was emphatically in the affirmative. I was taken aback. Was that Socialism? But I was not yet prepared to begin the battle. We dispersed. On the way Santibanez remarked: "That's the trouble with us. They are all anarcho-syndicalists." There was a touch of sadness and frustration in the tone of the old man. For the moment, I could say nothing to cheer him up; but I resolved to take up the struggle for Socialism.

I I

During World War I

SINCE THE reunion, I met my old German friends several times. They introduced me to the diplomatic circles and the leaders, men and women, of the local German community. The Germans were not exclusive like the Anglo-Saxons. They mixed more freely in the Mexican society. Following the very good rule that every German who went to reside in a foreign country must learn the language, all of them in Mexico spoke Spanish, in addition to English.

One of them, whom I met and became quite friendly with, was a septuagenarian scholar who had lived more than twenty years in the Far East as professor of philology in a Japanese University. But his life mission was different. He had come to the Far East with the object of writing a dictionary in five languages — Chinese, Japanese, German, French and English. He had been working on the monumental work all those years and required many more years to finish it. He was heart-broken that his life's mission was interrupted by Japan joining the war on the side of the Entente Powers. The Germans were sure that Japan would be loyal to her spiritual ally. And even after Japan openly joined the wrong side, there remained some secret relation between the two natural allies.

However, Dr. Gramatsky (that was the name of the old philologist) was distressed and waited impatiently until the war was over to return to Japan and resume his work. Learning that I had been to the Far East, he enquired if I knew the languages. I justified my ignorance on the ground that Chinese was so difficult to learn. The old encyclopedist amazed me with the remark that it was the easiest language. Duly impressed by his linguistic talent, I asked him to teach me

German and French, which he did quite well, although I am a very indifferent linguist. Only Spanish I picked up in a few months well enough to deliver my first public lecture in the language and write my first book.

As he was experiencing difficulty in finding a suitable residence within his modest means, I invited the old doctor and his wife, not less than thirty years junior, to occupy a part of my house. The good lady was very helpful in running the household; but the old man got on my nerves before long. He was the typical Prussian professor, blatantly reactionary to the core. One day, he told me that I must be acquainted with the soul of Germanic culture, if I wanted to learn the language properly. And, he added, Indian culture was so very akin to the Germanic that I should be captivated by the spirit of the latter. I had not yet quite outgrown cultural nationalism, so the Prussian professor's learned dissertation touched a sympathetic chord in my emotional make-up although that response of mine made me feel intellectually uncomfortable.

The next day, the doctor proposed that my German lesson would be my listening to a poem that he himself had composed — a poem which breathed the spirit of the Germanic culture. I enthusiastically welcomed the offer of such an interesting experience. It was an ode to the Kaiser and a passionate condemnation of the democratic world, which regarded him as a mortal man, to be pulled down from his proud imperial pedestal. I have forgotten the text; I did not care to keep a copy. But I remember the imagery of a gigantic shadow of the War Lord, a descendant of Charlemagne and the Ottos, cast on a blood-stained sandy waste. The other picture was that of an old man with blood-shot eyes and veins almost bursting out of his temples. I was frightened of having a case of apoplexy on my hands. But in the nick of time, the good lady appeared on the scene, took her husband away, put him in a bath tub and turned on the cold water tap. Later on I came to learn from experience that any criticism of the Kaiser and everything that he stood for excited the old man so much that nothing but an ice-cold bath could bring down the temperature of his boiling blood.

It was an ordeal to live in the same house with a pathological fanatic who might die of apoplexy any day. Nor could I throw the old man out in the street. As time passed and he came to know my sins against the tradition of Indo-German culture, we ceased to be on speaking terms. That impossible situation continued until the middle of 1919 when I met the first Russian Bolshevik. He had reached Mexico under strange circumstances, and was stranded. I had to come to his help, and asked the old German couple to quit, so that the stranded Bolshevik might be comfortably accommodated.

My contact with the other members of the German colony in Mexico was more educative and less painful. In the beginning I felt rather awkward to be lionised by society ladies who, I suppose, were doing their patriotic duty. But before long I succeeded in the attempt to hide my awkwardness in a strange surrounding with stiffness. It seems that this not very commendable behaviour continued to be my psychological armour for a long time. I realised that when recently I read a book by a British ex-communist whom I knew quite well when both of us were in Moscow in the early twenties. He describes me as the most arrogant man he ever met. I don't know if I deserve the compliment (the description in the book was derogatory); but it is true that I have always been rather stiff, if not arrogant. In the earlier days of my contact with modern ideas and modern culture, it was the expression of an inferiority complex. But in course of time, experience taught tolerance and modesty, which smoothened the angularities of a still immature personality.

The American wife of the Counsellor to the German Minister in Mexico took me under her protecting wings. They were a young couple who had met when he was Secretary at the German Embassy in Washington. Both were highly cultured, and their home was the meeting place of the social élite, Mexican as well as German. One day, the young couple, *Freiherr* and *Freifrau* (Lord and Lady) von Schoen called to invite me to tea at their home. Though naturally flattered by the exceptional honour of being invited personally by the hostess, I was also intrigued. After all, I was not such an important person. However, I liked the German diplomat and

his American wife. The latter complained against the rudeness of the local Anglo-American society, which boycotted her for having married a German. The unfairness of it! She did not marry an enemy alien; they married before America joined the war; she could not divorce the man she loved because a German submarine had sunk an American ship! The *Freiherr* smiled happiness and looked thankfully at the flushed face of the handsome young woman. But presently he frowned slightly and bit his lip. Why did not the American Government join the war a few months earlier? She knocked the floor with her high heels as if to emphasise the point. Then she would not be so humiliated now. That was thoughtless indiscretion of the impetuous ex-American lady, which obviously pained her German husband.

I could not imagine why she poured out the sorrow of her heart to a stranger, who could not possibly help her, not even with appropriate words and gestures of consolation. For the moment, the situation was rather awkward. The young man was evidently feeling very uncomfortable. Suddenly she laughed, took her husband's arm and said: "I am taking revenge." Then, turning towards me, "all good people of Mexico meet in our home. I want you to join." A smile to make the invitation irresistible, and she walked out, a tall handsome figure; the *Freiherr*, not a very impressive looking man, shook my hand and followed. He carried, as I learned later, a gnawing feeling that the scene humiliated the Prussian aristocrat in the presence of a stranger.

The same afternoon, when I came to their home for tea, he availed of the first opportunity to apologize for the behaviour of his wife. I was surprised; there was nothing to apologize for; on the contrary, she did me honour by taking a stranger into confidence. That set the young diplomat at ease and he became positively lyrical about his wife. She was the most brilliant light of Washington society. She won that coveted position not as a heiress, but by her own charm and wit. Hers thus was an unusual social success in the American capital, where wealth was the measure of all values. Rich American heiresses thronged Washington society to find husbands among foreign diplomats belonging to the European aristocracy — to

friends; but we would part company, sooner or later, perhaps never to meet again. She wanted to keep a memento. A photograph would do, I replied. She was evidently surprised by my ignorance of the difference between a photograph and a painted portrait; that the latter was a work of art. What is art? She explained briefly and promised to do so at length while she would be painting my portrait. I was again curious, and agreed to sit like a fool for a couple of hours for days. The idea of having my portrait painted by a nice rich lady, to be hung up in her salon, was flattering.

It was a pleasant surprise that she did not want me to sit still like a statue. On the contrary, she talked all the time she worked and tried to make me talk too. In a couple of days, the ice was broken, and I joined the conversation initiated by her. It was a discussion about art. My ideas scandalised her; but she concealed her reaction and took some pains to educate the boor lionised in the cultured German community.

The practical lesson began with music. Pablo Cazals was in Mexico. Would I like to go to his concert? I refused because music was an incoherent mass of noises for me. What did I think of vocal music? My opinion was not so drastic. Cazals' wife was a singer. I agreed to give her a trial. A woman standing rather stiffly in a conventional dress playing all manner of tricks with her voice made no appeal to me. But Cazals' performance on the cello made a hole in my armour of prejudice against music. Nevertheless, I resisted still for some time, until a Polish pianist gave me a practical lesson.

After some discussions, he told me: "Don't try to understand; music cannot be appreciated intellectually, not at first. It is felt." He made me sit by him at the piano; stretched the fingers of both his hands on the key-board; looked dreamily at nothing. Before I knew what was happening, there was a terrific noise. I felt a wave of vibrations in my entire nervous system. The pianist was frantically shaking his locks, his fingers moving rapidly on the keys. Another bang with both hands, and he stopped, as if in a trance. Then looked at me and asked how did I feel. "Don't think — how do you feel?" My obstinacy gave way and I confessed the experience of a physical sensation. "That is music," he said triumphantly.

was surprised. How could a German enter Japan during the war? I was reassured that there were ways for doing such things. Presumably, the gentleman would travel with a false passport as citizen of some other country. That was nothing new for me. However, the Minister took me into confidence with the revealing remark: "Japan is not our enemy." By and by, I came to know more about the international intrigue. For the moment, it was decided that the Doctor should leave as soon as possible, and more funds be placed at my disposal to be used for sending other emissaries.

Since the days in Java, I had not found the Germans so ready to part with money. Whatever might be the motive of their generousness, I was confronted with a moral problem. Should I accept more money than I could spend for the purpose for which it was offered? I remembered my experience of the Germans making use of purchasable Indian revolutionaries. Dozens of them, mostly belonging to the *Gadr Party* had been sent by the Germans with a few pistols and a few hundred dollars each, to make some trouble in the Malaya States or on the Siam-Burma frontier, troubles which could be reported in the German press as revolts against British Imperialism to keep up the morale at home. Those Indian dupes of German intrigues went on their mercenary mission with the high hope that the Indian troops stationed on the outskirts of the British Empire would rise in revolt at the call of the *Gadr Party* issued from the safe distance of San Francisco. Most of them were arrested on the way and held as prisoners until the end of the War. The few bolder adventurers reached their destination, to be caught and hanged. In some cases, the soldiers who were expected to revolt, betrayed the revolutionary emissaries. That tragic story of the Indian dupes of German intrigue is still to be told. The finale was enacted in the San Francisco Court during the trial of the "Hindu-German Conspiracy Case." Some of the Indian accused had been arrested in the Far East. One of them shot the leader of the *Gadr Party* dead in the dock to avenge for the death of so many dupes.

The memory of the callous behaviour of the Germans quietened my conscience. In China I had personally experienced that behaviour. They refused financial help when I could

Yet another precaution was to be taken. As a rule, those ships touched San Francisco also; but occasionally, some did not. One of those latter must be chosen. There would be no difficulty about landing and even staying in Japan because I was armed with a semi-diplomatic Mexican passport and a letter of introduction to the Mexican Consul-General in Yokohama. He was to help me in financial transactions through a Japanese bank. The difficulty was to reach the nearest Mexican port on the Pacific. The last stretch of the railway to Manzanillo passed through a mountainous country infested with bandits. There was no regular train service. Other Pacific ports were more inaccessible. And it was not certain that the ship I was to catch would touch the small port of Manzanillo. It might, to take a cargo of tobacco, which grew profusely in the surrounding country.

The first part of the journey to the Pacific coast — the major part was comparatively safe, although the railway ran through Zapatista territories. However, Guadalajara was the most important city on the Pacific slope; a regular train service was maintained. A passenger train under military escort ran daily from the capital to Guadalajara. The distance was not very big; trains leaving early in the morning could reach their destination while it was still daylight, if nothing serious happened on the way. For me, the first stretch of the journey was uneventful. The country was of barbaric magnificence, ideal for guerilla operations. No wonder that the Zapatistas could not be dislodged from their hideouts in those thickly wooded high mountain ranges.

Our train reached Guadalajara soon after dusk. I had been advised where to go. It was the best hotel of the western capital, as the city was called. I was in the heart of Mexico. During the previous years of revolution and civil war, few foreigners had ventured so far inside the turbulent country. A magnificent cathedral was the only remaining monument of the Spanish rule. Even the blood of the conquistadores had disappeared. The colonial aristocracy had run away from the dangers of the civil war. The neighbourhood was a fruit-growing country — the orchard of Mexico. The streets of the city were lined with huge heaps of mangoes, which grew wild

were fired at the wooded slopes on either side. There was no reply. We waited silently for the enemy's next move. Nothing happened; they seemed to have moved away. Meanwhile, the half-light of the dawn had given way to the brightness of the day. The Pacific was visible ahead of us to the West. The train started trundling downhill, and in a couple of hours reached Manzanillo.

It was a small, practically deserted port, hot in the day time, being in the tropics. Except for a number of fishing boats, there was no waterfront activity. Ocean-going vessels seldom called except those of the weekly coastal service between the South-California port of San Diego to Panama. A ship of the Japanese South-American line was expected to call to pick up a large cargo of tobacco; but none was sure. A couple of days later, the southbound coaster was due. Travelling on it, one could catch the Japanese ship at Salina Cruz, another Mexican port about 300 miles to the South. Instead of waiting indefinitely at Manzanillo with no certainty of the Japanese ship calling there at all, I decided to catch it at Salina Cruz.

The voyage along the coast in a fairly big American ship was enjoyable. There were only a few passengers. On the second day, the ship called for several hours at Acapulco. It is one of the finest natural harbours of the world — a large deep bay, surrounded almost on all sides by high mountains. Confronting the narrow entrance to the harbour, there stands high up on the mountain a big white church. It is quite a distance from the port, and the neighbouring hillside is sparsely populated. Who goes to that lonely church to pray? Very few, if any now. Once upon a time, it was a cloister meant for nuns condemned to do penance for their peccadillos. It was closed down by the Juaristas in the 'sixties of the last century, and several hundred fallen angels were set free.

Salina Cruz is a small but important port. From there, a railway line runs across the narrow strip of land, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. The distance is hardly more than a hundred miles, approximately the same as the breadth of the Isthmus of Panama. Originally, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec was selected

sheet of green glass), I did not know how long the ordeal lasted. Quietness, except for the roar of the still raging sea and the shrill whistle of the storm, descended on the deck — not of death, but of exhaustion. Suddenly, the eastern sky brightened, and the huge red disk of the sun rose out of the sea. The storm had gone down, although the sea was still heavy. The frail craft had weathered the storm for six hours — incredible!

Day-light woke up the passengers; they had fallen asleep out of exhaustion. They began to count themselves and their belongings. No passenger was missing; but a good part of the luggage had been washed away. How soon should we reach Veracruz? The skipper did not know. He seemed to have drifted too far out. However, the sun gave him the direction. About mid-day, he discovered that the storm had driven our boat quite a distance beyond Veracruz. She was turned backwards, and reached Veracruz late in the afternoon.

That was my first visit to the principal port of Mexico. But I had had enough of sight-seeing, and loved to be back to civilisation as soon as possible. It was too late to catch the train that evening. I went to a hotel, a very good one, of the international standard; had a bath and a good meal and sound sleep in a clean comfortable bed. In the morning, I went about to take a look over the town, where I returned several times later on.

The railway line from Veracruz to the capital was safe. Trains ran regularly and according to time-table. Except the one across the Andes, from Argentina to Chile, the Veracruz-Mexico City line is said to be the most beautiful in the world. From the sea-level it rises to the altitude of 8,000 feet; running latitudinally, it begins in the tropics and ends at the feet of eternally snow-capped mountains. Travelling by the night train, one cannot see much of the scenery. But when I woke up, the train had reached the Mexican plateau; the Smoking Mountain was standing guard, as he had done at the time of the Aztecs, and the White Woman sleeping. I was glad. It was like homecoming.

was cheating them. I wondered who was cheating whom! Anyway, all my German friends had gone from Mexico, I could cheat no more, and would not be cheated either.

One of the Indians who had come to Mexico was a lovable fellow. He was not a professional revolutionary, but had got mixed up with the crowd socially. He was a good mechanic, and as such earned a handsome wage at the Ford Factory. He had little patience for politics and thought that the Mexicans were fools. Nor did he sympathise with my new ideas. Socialism was senseless for a skilled worker who had earned five dollars a day. But he was lazy and reluctant to risk a return to his lucrative job at Detroit. Being thoroughly apolitical, he could be of no use to me. Nevertheless, he stayed on, and I paid him ungrudgingly several *gold bricks* week after week. On his part, he was satisfied to play the businessman on leave.

The failure of my last attempt to carry out the mission with which I had left India two and a half years ago definitely closed that chapter of my political career. Convinced that I could do nothing for the liberation of India in the near future, I resolved to apply myself wholeheartedly to the new fields of revolutionary activities which promised satisfaction, if not immediate success.

I recollected my conversation with the socialist leaders with reference to their attitude towards a possible American intervention in consequence of the conflict over the nationalisation clause of the Mexican Constitution. That issue should be the point of departure of activities which would, on the one hand, make of Socialism an effective political force and, on the other, strengthen national resistance to any possible foreign intervention. It could be imagined further how, on the basis of such an internal relation of forces in each country, the projected Latin American Union could be a powerful international instrument of mutual co-operation and common resistance to the overlordship of the northern colossus.

Recurring revolutions and perennial civil war were the curse for practically all the Latin American Republics. The revolutions mostly were military insurrections against established governments disliked by foreign interests firmly entrenched in

the economy of the country. Civil wars naturally followed such artificially engineered revolutions, and themselves in most cases degenerated into banditry, as the dispute was not over any political principle or social programme. Only professional soldiers and a handful of political intriguers could be actively interested in such ruinous adventures. Ignorance, poverty and destitution compelled the rural population to provide the soldiers of fortune with a steady supply of cannon-fodder.

But education and a high level of culture made the urban middle class disgusted with the prevailing state of affairs, and consequently it kept aloof from military insurrections and political intrigues. Under these circumstances, the relatively small class of industrial workers were influenced by anarcho-syndicalism, which taught them to distrust politics and politicians, and eschew political action. Yet, it was obvious that a greater sense of social responsibility and a broader revolutionary vision respectively, on the part of the urban middle-class and the industrial workers were the conditions for a healthier national life, and also for a greater resistance to aggressiveness and intrigues of foreign interests. Fortuitous combinations of circumstances had placed me in a position to help create the conditions for the establishment of political liberty and social justice in the country where I happened to be.

The new field of activity chosen, and its pattern visualised, I resolved to go ahead with no regret for the failure of my earlier mission, no wistfulness about a sterile past. I must see the President as soon as possible. Since my recent adventurous journey was undertaken not only with his knowledge, but tacitly under the protection of his Government, it could be presumed that he was already informed of my return. However, in the absence of the German intermediary, I must now directly seek an interview with the President. The good services of *La Mujer Moderna* could be easily enlisted. The editor of *El Pueblo* could also be relied upon for help in this connection. Meanwhile, I should resume contact with the socialist leaders and have a serious discussion with them about the ways and means of promoting the cause of Social Revolution under the given circumstances. I called on Santibanez, and at his place met a couple of young American Radicals.

Hundreds of pacifists, anarcho-syndicalists, socialists of all shades, had escaped to Mexico in order to evade compulsory military service, which was introduced soon after America joined the war. They were derogatorily called the *slackers*. According to their respective persuasion and predisposition, some wanted to join the Zapatistas, others to go to the El Dorado of Yucatan, and the rest to try their luck anywhere. Most of the Radical refugees, however, ultimately drifted towards the capital and congregated there.

Apart from their more or less approximating political creeds and social ideals, the left-wing journalism, art and literature of America were fairly well represented in the ranks of the refugees. There were, for example, Maurice Baker, poet and cartoonist, Irwin Granwich, novelist (subsequently known as Michael Gold), Henry Glintenkamp, painter and cartoonist, Carl Beals, journalist, who later gained some reputation as the author of books on Mexico and Spain. The first three, together with other minor lights amongst the *slackers*, had been regular contributors to the Radical literary and art journal *The Masses*, edited by Max Eastman; and they all belonged to the Greenwich Village group — the Bohemia of New York.

One of the two I met in the socialist leader's place was Charlie Philips, who had recently attained some notoriety for organising pacifist demonstrations in the campus of Columbia University. He was arrested together with a fellow student, daughter of a senior professor. Both ran away and reached safety in Mexico. In the midst of all that excitement, they married. Charlie was a boisterous young man, quite up to his reputation. He had heard about me already in New York, and was mighty glad to meet. I must meet the other guys also, and of course Elinore. We became friends, Charlie and I. He outgrew his pacifism, and became a passionate advocate of class struggle, although in the process of political evolution, he lost Elinore — physically, if not her affection, as he claimed perhaps as an anodyne for a bruised heart. He attended the Second World Congress of the Communist International as my fellow-delegate from Mexico, and later on when Manuel Gomez became a prominent member of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.

return to civil administration. In other words, *El Herald de Mexico*, as the projected daily was to be called, would be an organ of liberal democratic opinion. That much I gathered from the editor of *El Pueblo*. He even hinted that as an instrument to fight General Obregon, the new daily could count upon presidential patronage. His advice was to let the English section of the new daily inform American public opinion about the true nature of Mexico's problem.

The position was clear enough; on my report and recommendation, the shadow cabinet of the fraternity of Radical Slackers agreed to Charlie's accepting the appointment definitely. I undertook to write a series of articles on the "Monroe Doctrine." Collective work of a number of talented men, the English section of *El Herald* made an impression from the beginning. It carried clever cartoons, poems and short stories, which had a general appeal. Political views expressed in the Editorials initially pacifist and then more radical, went down as sugar-coated bitter pills. Charlie's aggressive chumminess proved to be irresistible for the Chief Editor, a man of the General's confidence, who in the beginning tried to be forbidding and officious. Before long, the English section set the tone of the main paper, and *El Herald* came to be an organ of Radical opinion.

legality of the Constitution; in other words the sovereignty of the Mexican people. But the Mexican government was prepared for a compromise, on the basis of the common agreement that the concessions granted under the Diaz regime had lapsed on the promulgation of a new Constitution, the Mexican Government would issue new leases to the old foreign concerns. The latter refused to agree. Thereupon, the Mexican Government threatened to prohibit export of petroleum on the ground that it was State property. One could suspect German hands pulling strings from behind. At the same time, the legality of the Mexican case was indisputable. A compromise was possible, and the Mexicans, being the weaker side, were eager for it. But they would not tolerate foreign business concerns flouting the fundamental law of the land.

A test case went up to the Supreme Court of Mexico. Anticipating that a Mexican Court would not overrule the Constitution, the American Government threatened to land troops on the Gulf ports to protect lawful commerce against arbitrary Government interference. The argument was that the petroleum fields were private property; therefore, prohibition of the export of petroleum would be confiscation. While a forcible seizure of the main source of national income was thus threatened, some American troops actually crossed the land frontier of the north on the pretext of keeping away Mexican bandits raiding American territory.

Naturally, Mexico City was full of excitement; anti-American feeling ran high. It was apprehended that individual Americans might be insulted and even assaulted in the resulting altercations. The pro-ally newspapers aggravated popular indignation by justifying the defiance of the petroleum companies and insinuating that the policy of the Mexican Government was dictated by German intrigue. A good-natured demonstration of anti-Americanism in that tense atmosphere is worth recapitulating.

The famous Negro pugilist, Jack Johnson, had recently to run away from the U.S.A. because he married a white woman. He took refuge in Mexico, where he tried to set up an agricultural colony for Negroes with Government help. Meanwhile, he was employed by the army to give boxing lessons to younger officers.

waitresses to put several tables together, sat down, and called for the manager. A rather sheepish looking man, trying to affect an air of dignity, appeared on the scene. In a cheerful chorus, the entire company shouted: "Jack, give your order to Mr. Sanborn." So, it was famous Jack Johnson. He grinned and looked embarrassed. The manager called several waitresses and ordered them to serve the party. One of the party who assumed leadership said: "The girls will do for us; but Mr. Sanborn, you must personally wait upon Jack to make amends for the insult done to him." The manager hesitated; thereupon, he was reminded that he was in Mexico where the black man was as good as the whitest of the white. Then he was given the stern warning that, if he wanted to do business in Mexico, he must obey the laws of the land, and in Mexico all were equal before the law, irrespective of the colour of their skin.

Gnashing his teeth to control his emotions, the manager went to the pantry, brought a tray and placed it before the Negro. The latter got up, and with a broad, frank smile, which must have shamed the insolent white man, shook his hand and said: "Pardon me for all the trouble, Mr. Sanborn." The party left the table and went out to be confronted with a riotously cheering crowd. There was neither any anti-American demonstration nor any nationalist outburst. The cheers were all for the Negro, who was carried on shoulders. It was a demonstration of the love of justice. A man had been insulted simply because of the dark pigment of his skin. Mexican chivalry wanted to vindicate human rights and human dignity.

I never met the Negro again except once, casually, much later, and felt that the experience had made a deep impression on him also. We were collecting money to publish a Spanish translation of the Soviet Constitution. Irwin Granwich and I ran into him one day on the street. Irwin stopped him: "Say, Jack, have you anything against the Bolsheviks?" A little puzzled, the Negro giant replied: "Nao, not that I know of." Irwin asked for a contribution and explained what for. Jack pulled out a ten dollar bill with a broad grin, and wished the Bolsheviks luck.

suggested that his friend Santibanez might be an exception and that we should meet to discuss the question of re-organising the Socialist Party.

It was my turn to go to the point: " Might we not organise working class action to protest against, and eventually to resist, the threatened American intervention? " " How? " he enquired, obviously interested. A general strike could paralyse the petroleum industry. Preparatory to that ultimate move, mass demonstrations should be organized in the capital. He shook his head, as if in despair. The anarcho-syndicalists did not see any difference between one Government and another; they will not raise a finger in support of our government. I thought that their influence could be overcome, if the government responded sympathetically to the economic demands of the working class. The discussion on these lines led to two decisions: firstly, we should have a conference with Santibanez and a few selected leaders of the Socialist Party; and secondly, I must have an interview with the President to submit the outlines of a labour policy of the Government for his consideration.

The Foreign Minister joined us as if to put an official seal on our decisions. Don Manuel made him acquainted with my plan of a possible popular resistance to American aggression. The Foreign Minister was more French than Spanish in his education as well as temperament. He evidently sought for a rational sanction for the plan. He was not a Socialist, but believed in democracy and social justice. His rational attitude and confession of faith was bourgeois, in the hasty judgment of an utopian Marxist moving emotionally first towards Communism, as I was then. Nevertheless, the experience of being taken into confidence and seriously by such high placed persons gave me the feeling of importance, which subdued the fervour of an uncompromising revolutionary judgment.

The next day, I discussed the matter with the *Slacker* fraternity, of course, only in inner circles, which was the editorial board of the English section of *El Heraldo*. Having found asylum in Mexico, should we not do something to help the host? My American friends being all Red revolutionaries,

I availed of the opportunity to give the information that other Socialists, such as the President of the Chamber of Deputies and others like him, might join the party if the outlook of the latter was broadened. Santibanez rushed to the defence of his vested interest: these opportunist parliamentarians and bourgeois intellectuals had only contempt for the working class. Diffidently, I counselled caution. What is the harm in meeting those people to discuss the possibility of co-operation, which would add so much to the strength and prestige of the party? If in the maturing crisis, the party could play a role, it was sure to become a political factor, which no government could ignore. Then I ventured the hint that the government might be willing to help the party play such a role.

The hint was not missed by the lawyer's shrewdness. Santibanez asked if I had seen Don Manuel. I admitted, and added that I had seen others also. He dropped the sectarian attitude of the leader of a small party, and with great enthusiasm enquired if Don Manuel had mentioned Maestro Casas. It was my turn to be surprised. What, the Rector of the University also a Socialist? I bluffed: leave those people to me. If the Executive Committee of the party could be persuaded to drop sectarianism, all those people would join, and the Government might take up a sympathetic attitude towards the immediate economic demands of the working class. As the latter mainly concerned the anarcho-syndicalists, it should not be difficult to coax them to fall in line.

There was a faint flush in the sallow cheeks of the Karl Marx of Mexico; behind the thick glasses, his eyes shone. After all, he might not have wasted a whole life for nothing.

On the other hand, the great national sport, bull fight, was prohibited by the Carranza Government as cruel and barbarous. The bull ring of Mexico City, built also at the time of Diaz, is the largest in the world — a circular stadium which accommodates 35,000 people. If the non-completion of the opera house could be regarded as a token of cultural setback, the prohibition of the bull fight was certainly a move in the opposite direction. But those who, like my teacher, lamented the faded glory of a past which belonged to the idle rich, were incapable of appreciating the merit of efforts to build up a democratic future.

Early in 1918, the huge bull-ring was put to better use, showing that revolution had not destroyed culture with the Diaz dictatorship. The Italian grand opera and the Russian ballet came again to Mexico City. The opera house could not be completed in a short time, nor did the revolutionary Government want to deprive the people of the enjoyment of art. The bull-ring was thrown open for the purpose, and for days it was full to capacity to hear Caruso sing to an audience of more than thirty thousand in a gigantic Greek theatre. I could never imagine that human voice could be anything like that. In comparison to the majesty of Caruso's voice, Pavlova's dancing and the whole ballet appeared to me rather flimsy and frivolous. My appreciation of great art was still very primitive.

A hefty man in thin light underwear jumping about the stage — I could not see what was the art in it. It might be skilful gymnastics; then why not go to the circus to see even more skilful performances of that nature? As a matter of fact, with respect to ballet my artistic taste refused to be cultivated. The only ballet I could ever sit through was in the third act of every Russian opera. And even then it was not the dancing — women wheeling on their toes like tops — but the music and the riotousness of the ensemble which impressed.

I have already mentioned that after some initial lessons in grammar, I learned Spanish by translating, with the help of my good teacher, the small book, *The Way to Durable Peace*, I had written while still in the U.S.A. In Mexico I added to it a longish chapter on the origin of the Monroe

worst sufferer in this respect. In addition to numerous local armed interventions, the U.S.A. waged two major wars against Mexico and annexed the extensive territory now covered by the States of Texas, Arizona and California.

Until the closing decades of the nineteenth century, American energy was absorbed at home. Even after that period the U.S.A. was a debtor country. Foreign capital, particularly British, played a big role in the drama of spectacular industrial development. During that time, the U.S.A. could not interfere in the economic life of Central and South America. Having completed the conquest of the continent to the north of the Rio Grande by the end of the nineteenth century, the U.S.A. turned to the conquest of the New World. The political protectorate established by the Monroe Doctrine served the purpose of financial penetration which amounted to economic monopoly, and reduced the political independence of the weaker neighbours to a mere formality. To promote periodical revolutions and civil wars was a part of the policy. Pan-Americanism was essentially not much different from Pan-Germanism or the Japanese doctrine of "co-prosperity sphere."

The chapter on the Monroe Doctrine written for my book first appeared as a series of articles in *El Heraldo de Mexico*. They created some sensation and won for me many friends amongst well-placed Mexicans. I was informed by the *Mujer Moderna* that Don Venustiano was deeply impressed by them. They were not only an interpretation of history, but also led to some political conclusion: the necessity to put an end to the North-American tutelage. With that purpose, a Latin American League should be formed as the counterblast to the Pan-American conference sponsored by the U.S.A. I had developed this idea, and it appealed to President Carranza, before the German Kaiser's Privy Councillor came to Mexico with the mission of encouraging such a movement. His extremely friendly attitude towards me most probably was determined by this knowledge.

The publication of my first literary work was celebrated by a society function — a tea party was given by *la Mujer Moderna*. Not only was her entourage of budding literatures present, but

cigarette, and half a dozen men rushed with fire to light it; she won't allow anybody the familiarity of taking out the hair-pin. It was her turn to make a speech — a short one, only a couple of sentences, but very businesslike, to the point. The author of the new book must be presented to the President of the Republic. Preparatory to that ceremony, she would personally deliver to Don Venustiano a presentation copy with the author's inscription. Everybody acclaimed approval; again it was Maestro Casas who condescended a grudging consent by almost imperceptibly shaking the enormous head only once. When the party began to disperse, he came up to me and growled: That was all frivolous emotionalism. The case should be submitted to the critical judgment of people who could help the formation of intelligent public opinion. It was a plausible case. Would I care to deliver some lectures on the subject in the University?

I was flattered; but at the same time, the idea of making speeches sent a cold shiver down my spine. Never in my life had I until then made a public speech. It was not a part of our conspiratorial revolutionary activity. We never believed words could make a revolution; more powerful weapons were required. I did get over that early prejudice, but could never be a success on the platform. In Mexico, I did learn to make public speeches, but only to restricted audiences, such as party conferences, party membership meetings, trade unions. I did not address any mass meeting until I came to Russia.

However, I accepted Maestro Casas' invitation, and after a few days delivered my first public lecture at the University. The entire student-body and all the teachers were present. The lecture was in Spanish; it was previously written out with the help of my teacher, who appeared to be very proud of his pupil. On the second day, I was more courageous; I did not read out the written paper, but delivered its contents from memory.

There were five lectures. On the last day Maestro Casas presided and made a short concluding speech; a new interpretation of the recent history of the New World had been placed before the students and teachers of the University for a critical examination. The learned guest had drawn some bold

and provocative conclusions from an independent study of history. If he was right, whoever pronounced that judgment must do so fully conscious of the responsibility involved. The liberators of Latin America were indeed great men; their memory must be respected; but the struggle for liberation in the contemporary world must blaze new trails. That I thought, was a very significant hint. Nothing more outspoken could be said from the academic chair. But it was unmistakable; the doyen of the intelligentsia of the land sounded the tocsin of a social revolution.

The feeling (it was rather wishful thinking) that I might be contributing to the initiation of a social revolutionary movement was very gratifying. It was one of the happiest moments of my life, marking the opening of a new chapter.

Chess, Socialism, and Riding

MY SPANISH teacher was the chess champion of Mexico; Don Manuel, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, was his rival. Even as a student in India, I had played the game, amateurishly, and wanted to learn it well. It was the only indoor game which had any appeal to me. I thought that it was a sheer waste of time to play cards. Fortunately, my Spanish teacher was not a snob; though the national champion, he did not feel it beneath his dignity to play frequently with an amateur like me.

I no longer required any Spanish lessons; yet I liked the old man to come three times a week, as he also did to. Chess replaced the Spanish language as the subject of my lessons. Don Manuel used to join us occasionally; and I got the rare opportunity to learn the game by watching two masters matching their wits. I thought the latter was more brilliant, trying to imitate the style of Capablanca, the then world champion. The other man was more methodical, and almost always won by wearing out the brilliance of the opponent with patience. Immediately after the opening gambits, Don Manuel quickly marshalled his more powerful pieces for an all-out attack. Checked at that early stage of the game, he seemed to lose interest, and the opponent had his way. The latter was in no hurry to counter the initial thrusts; invariably his first concern was to castle his king in a particular position. By that defensive tactic, he somehow blunted the edge of the attack. Thereafter, it was a game of patience and matter of time.

Although it failed more often than succeeded, Don Manuel's style appealed to my temperament. But whenever I tried it the champion won the game even before my powerful piece

representatives in that respect. I was relieved to know that it was going to be not a stiff official function, but might be a fruitful interview.

The President of the Mexican Republic resided in the old castle of Chapultepec built on a hillock in the midst of a beautiful park at a distance of five miles from the city. The broad avenue connecting the park with the city was the Champs d'Elysees of the New World — the scene of a daily fashion parade. The bridle-path along the avenue continued inside the park, where rich refreshments were served to the fashionable riders in luxurious pavilions. Since the days of the ill-fated Maximilian and his Queen Charlotte, some of the finest horses of the world had been seen trotting, cantering or galloping on the famous Chapultepec bridle-path. Every European celebrity was counted amongst the illustrious riders, one time or another.

In the history of Mexico, the horse occupies a place of singular interest. The equestrian species is not a native of the New World. The Spaniards first introduced horses in Mexico, and possession of those strange animals contributed not a little to their conquest. Men riding on the back of animals so much stronger than themselves must have appeared to the superstitious Aztecs as gods descending from the heavens. While there is no reason to assume that the aborigines of the New World came there from India across the Behring Straits, the ancestry of the Mexican horse is certainly Asiatic. The Saracens had brought Arabian horses to Spain, and their progeny came over to the New World with the Spanish conquerors. The native-bred Mexican horse, however, is smaller than his Arabian ancestor. But they are fine animals, and practically every Mexican is an excellent rider.

Having made Mexico my second home, I had to learn the national sport. I had always liked riding and wanted to do it well. But I never had much of a chance. Shortly before leaving India, I had taken some lessons on the Calcutta Maidan. I was then an absconder, as most of the time I used to be in those days. I expected that very early in the morning, when the Maidan was deserted, there should be no undesirable encounter. I was mistaken; on the third or fourth day, I saw Denham the then Chief of the Special Branch C.I.D., also

riding. My equestrian practice thus ended abruptly. In Mexico the chance came again, I seized it with enthusiasm. But I disliked joining the parade of fashionable riders foreign, on the Chapultapec bridle-path. After a few days' practice, as soon as I felt myself secure in the saddle, I preferred cross-country riding. Mexicans ride in the Spanish style, legs stretched out fully in long stirrups. I found this much more comfortable than the English. The Mexican saddle is also more comfortable; one sits much more secure. I was an expert rider with both hands free, because the reins were thrown round the pommel in the front of the saddle. So on "Silver King" (that was the name of the white horse regularly hired) and accompanied by my Alsatian, I rode miles every morning, exploring the entire neighbourhood of the city, right up to the lower slopes of the Sierra and making many friends amongst the country folk.

In my days, the old glory had faded away; yet, even at noon, the Avenida de Chapultapec was enlivened by motor cars carrying gaily dressed society ladies accompanied by gentlemen in brilliant military uniforms. Nobody counted for anything in Mexico City could stay away from the *paseo*. The President himself was not an exception. Early in the afternoon, his black limousine emerged from the castle gates, drove out to the city and returned. Throughout the drive, which lasted for half an hour or so, the President was occupied with the polite gesture of raising his hat to the numerous socialites who participated in the fashion

Interview with the President

THE DAY before the interview, Don Manuel came to inform me that he would call for me at 11 a.m. Then, in a rather embarrassed manner, he suggested that I should be properly dressed. He must have noticed that I never dressed conventionally, according to particular occasions. On my saying that I did not possess different clothes for different times of the day he offered to take me immediately to the tailor who would make me presentable within twenty-four hours. There should be no objection to having a new suit of clothes cut in a particular fashion. But I did not like the idea of attaching so much importance to conventional dressing up, and refused to be taken, as it were, into the greenroom to be made up for appearing on the stage. I said that, if the President was sufficiently interested in myself, he should not mind what I wore provided of course that it did not smell badly; and my clothes were very presentable, good enough for the snobbish German society of the city. In the U.S.A., I was poor; but since coming to Mexico, I could afford to be well tailored.

The little scene with my good friend Don Manuel settled the taste for the rest of my life. I never wore a morning coat or a dinner jacket; stiff collar was my pet abomination, and for years I was known to friends throughout Europe for my uniform of gray flannels and brown coat. I still think that that is the most comfortable and presentable outfit for men. In dinner jackets, particularly the long-tail variety fashionable in those days, men looked like monkeys; and for them to dance, flapping their tails, was the most ludicrous sight.

Don Manuel's attitude to my whim was quite good-natured. He wondered if I was not a Russian Bolshevik in disguise, who

Government popular, so that he could consolidate his position as against rivals like General Obregon. The President was particularly anxious to isolate the latter by exposing the fact that he had secured American patronage by promising repeal of the Petroleum Law on becoming the President of the Republic. Obregon was Governor of the large and rich State of Sonora with several hundred miles of common frontier with the U.S.A. There was a number of large modern agricultural farms in Sonora; they were all owned by Americans who also held concessions for exploiting the mineral riches. As Governor of the State, Obregon was closely associated with a powerful group of American businessmen led by the Texas Oil King Dahomey. The President was naturally anxious to remove his rival from the position of vantage; but he did not dare to do so. The ambitious General, relying on American support, might raise the standard of revolt and plunge the country again into a civil war before it was hardly out of the earlier one. A popular anti-American movement would be good strategy; it would have the fullest, albeit secret, support of the Federal Government.

Don Manuel gave an interesting piece of information: There was a school teacher in Sonora who was politically ambitious and called himself a Socialist. He had organised agrarian strikes in some of the American farms, and consequently attained a measure of popularity as well as incurred the displeasure of the Governor. Carranza himself, being a feudal landlord, would naturally frown on the political activities of such a man. But again, considerations of political strategy might prevail. It was to encourage the ambitious school teacher to offer himself as the popular candidate for the governorship of the State. The encouragement could be given through the intermediary of the Socialist Party after it was reorganised as a mass organisation. When the school teacher's name was mentioned, I remembered that he had enthusiastically welcomed the proposed socialist conference and promised to attend it with a large delegation from the State of Sonora. It was Plutarco Calles, who did become not only the Governor of the State, but rose to the presidency of the Republic after Obregon. In between, he served on the Carranza

We were led across the hall to a door which opened to let us into a large room looking over the tops of the trees in the park. My companion introduced me to the President and several Ministers, all in military uniform except two. The President wore striped trousers and a morning coat. Drinks were served — different sorts of wine, no hard liquor. Don Venustiano chatted with me standing by one of the tall windows, a glass of wine in hand. I had by that time learned to enjoy the luxury. He talked about my round trip through the Western and Southern States and joked about the encounter with bandits. It was very difficult to pacify a mountainous country with a few good roads and worn-out railways. Then he added in a confident tone that it would be done by and by if only the powerful neighbour of the north would leave them alone.

The conversation was thus skilfully led up to the threat of intervention. Until then the others stood by listening. Now they all showed signs of agitation, and some indignant remarks were made. I fully sympathised and expressed the conviction that the Mexican people would surely vindicate their honour and sovereignty. Out of gratitude for the hospitality and protection I had received, I would do everything to serve my adopted country. With the concurrence of all present, the President congratulated me on my success in reminding the Socialists that they were also Mexicans, and must do their duty to the *patria* (motherland). I was thankful for the appreciation of the little service I could render to my adopted country, but at the same time ventured the remark that it was not easy to preach patriotism to the people who did not feel that the *patria* belonged to them. Then I hastily added that that was the case in every country; Mexico was no exception. The benevolent aristocrat retorted that to give land to the peons was the object of the Mexican revolution; but the agrarian reform could not be carried out fully as yet because the meddlesome foreigners instigated civil war for all these years. Don Manuel murmured something about legislation for the protection of labour. The Chief Executive replied that it was the business of the head of the Legislature to see that just and equitable laws were passed. Then, turning towards me, he said that he wanted to appoint a Labour Minister. Did I think that among the

A Regional Socialist International

THE FIRST conference of the Socialist Party of Mexico met in December 1918. In addition to the several hundred delegates from different States of the Republic, a number of socialist leaders from Central and South American countries assembled on the occasion to discuss the plan of the Latin-American League and set up an organising committee. The latter group included lawyers, teachers, authors, poets, journalists — all passionate crusaders for the liberation of the working class, but among them there was not a single industrial labourer or a son of the soil. The singular fact did not fail to strike me, although I then missed its significance. Most probably, the overwhelmingly earthy composition of the Mexican delegation drove the experience down in my sub-conscious mind, to be recollected many years later when intellectual maturity resulting from many other experiences began to dispel the mist of the dawn of the new faith.

Among the Mexican delegates, there were workers from the oil fields, some of them highly skilled mechanics, men and women employed in textile mills, miners, dockers, railwaymen, motor drivers; there were artisans as well as a few small traders; and many came from the land; not ordinary labourers, but overseers in large modern farms. Intellectuals and professional men, such as teachers, writers, artists, physicians, lawyers, who mostly belonged to the capital. Provincial delegations included a good many school masters. There were few well-versed in socialist theory; the industrial workers were mostly anarcho-syndicalists; and the general level of education rather low. But all were fervent utopians — passionate believers in social revolution. Bakunin and Kropotkin shared

back. But I suspected that it would rather be a demonstration of the mediaeval attitude to the female which prevailed among the most fervent advocates of social revolution, than of proletarian wrath against *petit bourgeois* vulgarity.

However, with that thin sugar-coating, the bitter pill went down. As a matter of fact, I felt, though with some trepidation that "the children of starvation" were happy and proud; the distinguished gathering was a recognition of the importance of the confidence. Even the sternest revolutionary is not always immune to flattery. I also felt flattered by the success of my first attempt at high politics. But before the conference settled down to business, it was distracted by an uproar of human voices outside the hall. We did not propose to play Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark; the proletariat was not really forgotten. Thanks to the dramatic sense of the Bohemian revolutionary emigrés from the United States, the stage-management was excellent. To the revolutionary class was allotted the all-important role of occupying the streets. Revolutions take place there, not in halls.

The delegates rushed out, the respectability followed, to welcome a mass demonstration led by Charles Philips and Irwin Granwich. Behind a huge picture of Lenin, held high in front, there was a forest of red flags and festoons. Slogans written (of course in Spanish) on the latter were striking: "Down with Yankee Imperialism", "Petroleum Belongs to the Mexican People", "Long Live Revolutionary Alliance of Latin American Republics", "Long Live the Bolsheviks", "Long Live the Soviet Republic of Mexico." I felt that Charlie's enthusiasm had carried him too far. Yet, it was an achievement to have persuaded an overwhelmingly anarcho-syndicalist demonstration to raise some of the slogans.

According to a previously laid plan, socialist agitators had collected small groups of "the children of starvation" from the backwaters of the city and led them to join a mass demonstration in the Plaza — an open space in the centre of the city. To the north stood the magnificent old cathedral built by the slave labour of countless pagan Mexican peons to satisfy the vanity of conquering Christianity; and to the east, the rambling ugly structure of the *Palacio Nacional*, once the gilded residence

They admitted that many non-socialists would participate in a moment for the defence of liberty and democracy against Yankee Imperialism, but apprehended opportunist deviations unless the organisation was controlled by proletarian revolutionaries. No decision was made except that the possibilities must be explored on the spot, and for that purpose I should undertake an extensive tour which, however, could not be done before the initial period of the reorganisation of the Mexican Socialist Party. Meanwhile, the delegates from Central and South America returned to their respective countries, where local committees were to be set up, mainly to popularise the plan.

Before the provincial delegates dispersed, the Executive Committee met to discuss with them the question of setting up party organisations in the various States of the Republic. On that occasion, Calles stood head and shoulders above his fellow delegates. He staggered the Committee by proposing that the Socialist Party should lead an armed uprising in Sonora with the object of overthrowing General Obregon from the Governorship of the State. When it was pointed out that Obregon commanded a considerable army and was suspected of getting help from North America, Calles impetuously, but very indiscreetly, retorted that exactly for that reason the Federal Government should secretly support the anti-Obregonista movement which he could organise and lead.

It was a very exciting perspective; but would it not be too big a bite for a party still to be organised? "Comrade General Secretary," Calles addressed me personally, "that's how things are done in Mexico." Could he have some time to speak with me personally in detail, so that I saw how the ground lay? Of course, I would be delighted if the Committee authorised me. The permission was granted, and the same evening I came to know intimately the village schoolmaster who was to be the President of the Republic four years later.

prepared for the eventuality; he could organize an anti-Obregonist uprising with popular support, provided that the Federal Government backed him. In that case, he would be the obvious Federal nominee for the governorship of the State. He clinched the issue by inviting me to visit Sonora to see personally how the ground lay before I put up his plan for the approval of President Carranza.

It was all very exciting. Would it not be going beyond my depth? The spirit of adventure prevailed. The plan might be fantastic; but what had I to lose if it failed? Nothing. In any case, I was sure to be richer by some experience of the kind of things we had dreamt of doing in India, but could not. The worst would be that I must flee from Mexico in search of safety in some other land. The dice were cast. Calles left the capital a couple of days later. I was to follow him soon afterwards.

The Party Executive pranced like a pack of war horses when I reported my conversation with Calles. The Socialist Party was no longer a small group of propagandists. Before long, it would be leading an actual armed insurrection and one of its members might soon be the Governor of a State where the New Social Order would naturally be established. Two members of the original group, both hefty workmen, volunteered to accompany me to Sonora, their rough proletarian manners ill-concealed an affectionate attachment — anxiety for my safety. Revolution might be a dream, but I had made friends.

Lest there might be any suspicion in the Obregonista camp, it was publicly announced that, in pursuance of the resolution of the Conference of the Socialist Party, the new General Secretary would undertake an extensive tour of the Republic. The Orizaba, the seat of textile industry, the all-important port of Veracruz and the petroleum fields along the Gulf coast were included in the tour programme. All the places were far away from Sonora, which was to be visited rather incidentally, so as not to arouse any suspicion.

My destination was not easily accessible; travelling thereto was still rather hazardous. There was no direct railway connection. One had to travel either through the U.S.A. or by sea along the Pacific coast. The first route was the safer and shorter in time; but it was closed for me. Remembering the harrowing

experience of the journey on a coasting vessel from Puerto Mexico to Veracruz, I was unwilling to repeat it on the Pacific coast. The alternative was to travel overland under military convoy. Anyhow, I must discuss Calles' plan with friends in high quarters, and ultimately the President's connivance, if not consent, was to be obtained before any step was taken. It turned out to be much less difficult than I expected. The plan was enthusiastically received at the army headquarters. General Obregon was becoming too dangerous to be tolerated much longer. He must be removed from Sonora, where he could be in constant touch with the North-Americans and build up a large army with money freely supplied by the Texas Oil Company. The political aspect of the plan must be discussed with Don Venustiano.

Another interview with the President was due, for me to report the result of the Socialist Conference as regards the projected Latin-American League. The other plan, immediately of so much greater importance, could be submitted incidentally on that occasion. As thereafter I was to see the President quite frequently, the formalities of interview were dispensed with. We met at Don Manuel's place for dinner, which was not publicly announced even as a social function.

Don Venustiano naturally was more interested in Calles' plan than in my report of the rather slow progress of the Latin-American League. Of course, the constitutional head of the State could not speak frankly with reference to the plan of an armed insurrection against one of his subordinates. But he agreed that a popular campaign for the election of State Governors should be encouraged wherever law and order were restored, and added that, thanks to General Obregon's able administration, Sonora was certainly ready for the establishment of a constitutional regime. The Federal authorities would order the election in Sonora, and direct General Obregon to take all measures calculated to guarantee the fullest freedom for a constitutional election campaign. That was clear enough. The President's constitutional correctness was the green signal for the anti-Obregonist movement. I was learning how things were done in Mexico.

pillaged by professional bandits who alone benefited from the condition of lawlessness and disorder created by the civil war. Only of late, garrisoned by Federal troops, the central mining States were slowly returning to normal conditions. Though the refineries were still idle, some of the mines had begun working, providing employment to an increasing number of displaced and destitute peasants of the neighbourhood.

The proletarian hearts of my two colleagues went out in sympathy for the comrades labouring there without protection. They insisted that we must stop for some days to hold meetings, organise a trade union and establish a branch of the Socialist Party. I was not sure how the local military Commanders would react to such "revolutionary" activities; but at the same time, it was impossible to oppose the legitimate function of the self-appointed liberators of the toiling masses. They were simple-minded fanatics who could not be expected to observe the delicate rules of revolutionary political conspiracy. However, a few days' break in an arduous journey was welcome. While my conscientious colleagues went about their revolutionary duty, I preferred to take it easy.

The deserted mining villages, protruding pitheads overgrown with tall grass and rusting refineries behind crumbling walls, situated in valleys, were surrounded by thickly wooded mountain slopes, hot springs gushing out here and there. I was reassured by the local military Commandant that the neighbourhood was completely clear of bandits, who had withdrawn northwards into the higher and more inaccessible ranges of the Sierra Madre. In a few days, when continuing the journey, we should have to come within the radius of their murderous operations.

The *jefe* (local military Commander) was a jovial full-blooded Indian in the middle forties. In the typical Mexican manner, he welcomed me as a brother, and a fellow-fighter for the cause of revolution. His confession of faith afforded the opening for a political conversation. Referring to the activities of my colleagues, I diffidently hoped that the *jefe* did not mind; we had no intention of embarrassing him. He stopped my apologetic explanation with a majestic wave of a powerful arm, as if to emphasise the staggering exclamation: "Why

Portrait of a Future President

SONORA is the second largest State of the Republic of Mexico. It has a four-hundred mile land frontier with the States of Arizona and New Mexico of the North-American Union. Running practically the whole distance through desert country, the frontier could be nowhere clearly demarcated nor properly guarded. The result was that there was brisk smuggling of all sorts of goods both ways.

Under the influence of President Wilson's Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, a fundamentalist Christian, drinking of alcohol had just (in 1918) been prohibited in the United States. But the forbidden fruit was in great demand, particularly in the cattle-breeding ranches and mining camps in the States of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. Therefore, a voluminous illegal trade in alcohol was carried on across the unclearly demarcated and badly guarded northern border of Sonora. Large quantities of alcohol entered the State through the small ports on the Gulf of California. Not being a contraband in Mexico it travelled freely on the railway from Guaymas, the Gulf port, to the frontier town of Nogales. The railway ran through Hermosilla, the capital of the State. Though carried on by Chinese, Japanese and Mexican nationals, the lucrative traffic was financed by Americans. Before long, it nearly provoked American armed intervention in Mexico, and incidentally contributed to Calles' political fortune.

My visit to Sonora was not very eventful. Sparsely populated, there was little life of any kind. Hermosilla, in those days, was a glorified village. All important Mexicans lived in the frontier town of Nogales. Calles pointed out that fact as guaranteeing the success of his plan. The southern three-quarters of the huge

school teacher between them would lead the rural flock to the polling booths to vote for the democratic candidate. As there would be none other than Calles, his election was certain, if it did come to voting, he repeated. Evidently he did not believe that there would be any. I wondered how he could be so sure; there was no civilian rival, but the military was still the master of the situation. Would they let an openly anti-Obregonista candidate for the State Governorship have a walk-over?

My misgiving was removed the next day, when a number of officers of the local garrison met me clandestinely on the invitation of Calles. They were all subordinates of General Obregon and owed allegiance to their chief. But they were all Bolsheviks! They had heard from Calles that a Bolshevik Party of Mexico had been formed to fight Yankee Imperialism. As officers of the revolutionary army, they must pledge their support to the candidate of the new party. The memory of the conversation with the *jefe* at Aguascalientes still fresh in memory, I said no more than thankfully accept the pledge in behalf of the Bolshevik(?) Party of Mexico.

On my return to the Federal capital, I was surprised to learn that Calles was not over-optimistic when he repeatedly made the enigmatic remark: "If it actually came to an election." While a conspiracy was being hatched to oust him from his stronghold, General Obregon had resigned his governorship of Sonora and shifted the headquarters of his army command to Mexico City. That was indeed a bold and puzzling move. A representative of the English section of *El Heraldo de Mexico* was deputed to have an interview with the General. He was very frank; he was grateful to Don Venustiano for relieving him of all official responsibility so that he could prepare for the coming presidential election campaign. What would be his programme? Agrarian revolution at home, and friendly relations with all abroad. He did not believe that Germany was going to win the war, and had no idea about what was happening in Russia. Therefore, his immediate plan was to go abroad with the object of obtaining first-hand knowledge of things, so that, if entrusted to guide the destiny of the Mexican people, he would be able to prove himse-

General Obregon having resigned and been granted leave to go abroad for rest and medical treatment, Plutarco Elias Calles was appointed the Governor of Sonora. The Federal Government declared that in the absence of any other candidate, it was not necessary to hold the election. The news was flashed in an extra of *El Herald de Mexico*; the Socialist Party celebrated its first great victory with jubilation. The credit for it ought to be ascribed to the astuteness and audacity of Calles. But the party doctrinaires celebrated it as the victory of Marxist realism over anarcho-syndicalist utopianism. If that was so, in the last analysis, the credit belonged to me. I disowned it, not in mock modesty but honestly. As a new convert to the Marxist faith, I believed in the sovereignty of objective conditions and the inevitability of historical developments. I might have been an instrument, but things would have happened exactly as they did, anyhow.

Calles was a stormy petrel. Within a matter of months, since his meteoric rise from the lowly station of a village school master to the governorship of the State, he presented his patron, the Federal Government, with a serious problem. It was the choice between the risk of a possible American armed intervention and a climb down in an international conflict which would impair the prestige of an intransigent patriotism.

Obscure men suddenly coming to the top as soldiers and politicians was not unprecedented in Mexico. But the elevation of an avowed Socialist to the governorship of the second largest State of great strategic importance was a novelty. For Americans having vested interests in the economy of Sonora, as holders of mining concessions or cattle-breeders or smugglers of alcohol across the frontier, it was like a red rag to the bull. They gnashed their teeth, cursed and spat in the true style of the Wild West he-man. But they could do nothing against the outrage until the "red upstart" gave them an opening to hit. Calles, on the other hand, itched to do something spectacular to justify his dramatic rise to power. A go at the generally disliked Yankee was sure to be popular.

The prohibition in the United States had contributed to the rise of a chain of bars along the frontier on the Mexican side. Every night crowds of "he-men" from the mining colonies

and cattle ranches of Arizona and New Mexico frequented the drinking dens and the brothels which had sprung up around them. Violence and vulgarity knew no bounds; drunken brawls frequently ended in murder. Such a scandal should not be tolerated in any civilised country. But it could not be stopped without incurring the wrath of those who made money from the sinful traffic in alcohol. The traffic passed through the State of Sonora. To control or forbid it, therefore, was within the legal competence of the State Government. No effective control being possible in the absence of an efficient and incorruptible civil administration, the governor issued a decree prohibiting supply of alcohol to the bars along the frontier, which facilitated wholesale breach of law on the other side. Calles thought that his morally justifiable action would be regarded also as a gesture of good-neighbourliness.

The righteous indignation of those making money out of sin knew no bounds; they vigorously protested against the dictatorial encroachment on the freedom of trade, and appealed to their home government to protect the American citizens' legitimate right in a lawless land. Confident of the powerful protection, which had of late been frequently forthcoming whenever demanded, the alcohol smugglers openly defied the decree prohibiting their trade. Dispensing with their Chinese and Mexican employees, the American owners announced that they would themselves convoy the cargo of alcohol from the port of Guaymas to the frontier of the United States. The railway which carried the contraband was also owned by an American company. The alcohol smugglers and railway officials co-operated in the defiance of the law of the land, practically demanding extra-territoriality.

It appeared that the new governor had taken too big a bite. The Federal Government could not help him much, and the Socialist Party still less. The former sent a diplomatic note of protest to Washington; and the latter invoked the international solidarity of the proletariat — and called upon their comrades on the other side of the frontier to rise in a mighty revolt against capitalist greed and imperialist arrogance. Both were equally futile. In that desperate position, Calles got support from an unexpected quarter. The army which was

still formally under the command of the deposed General Obregon went over to him, to teach the insolent Yankees a good lesson. Now as General, Calles, the Governor, ordered the seizure of the cargoes of alcohol wherever found throughout the State, and to arrest all who claimed proprietorship or resisted the enforcement of the law. The army took the matter in hand; it was a little war against the traditional enemy. The officers rewarded their patriotism with fills of free drinks. A large number of American citizens were arrested; a few might have been killed; they were all armed. The yellow press on the other side of the frontier carried stories of atrocity.

The fat was in the fire. The perennial spectre of American armed intervention again cast its shadow athwart the country. Effective resistance was out of question; on the other hand, something must be done to save face. Otherwise, the demonstrated weakness of the Federal Government might encourage revolts against it. Carranza rose to the situation, to overcome the crisis with a stroke of statesmanship. In recognition of his patriotic services during the short period of his governorship, he invited General Calles to join the Federal Government as the Minister of Labour, and requested Obregon to return to his post and set things in order to the satisfaction of all concerned.

In Power By Proxy

CALLES' DRAMATIC elevation to Federal Ministership did not surprise anyone outside the Socialist Party. Meteoric rise of obscure persons in the political or military firmament was a frequent phenomenon in revolutionary Mexico. It happens whenever a country is in the process of social churning. Chaos provides equal opportunity to all, although it may often be seized by incompetence. But fortuitous prominence does not last long, particularly when there is no established political order or a popular party to patronise mediocrity. Revolution may eat her own children, but she also breeds non-conformism and heresy. Calles was a child of the revolution. In his case, original obscurity was not associated with competence, nor was mediocrity the sanction for his popularity. But history being a harmony of accidents, the obscure school teacher might or might not have risen to prominence.

Success is the measure of greatness, and men greater than the successful great men are known to have preferred unpopularity to paying the price of success. Calles certainly had his merits, which however might not have raised him to prominence and power if he was not helped by a fortuitous combination of circumstances. And these latter were created by romanticists who believed that they were making history. I must plead guilty of having been one of them, although in those days I called myself a revolutionary, contemptuous of romanticism; I did not know that an honest revolutionary was a romanticist, revolution being a romantic adventure.

Months before Calles appeared on the scene as the stormy petrel of Mexican politics, the way to his rise to power had been prepared, historically so to say, by Don Manuel's good

services in persuading President Carranza to patronise my political experiment. In the first formal interview, he had expressed his desire to appoint a Labour Minister and enquired if a suitable candidate could be found amongst the Socialists. That evidently was a gesture meant to grant an official recognition to the nascent Socialist Party and consequently raise its status in the public life of the country. But for the predisposition to patronise the Socialist Party, President Carranza need not have taken any notice of the obscure school teacher, and might have treated him differently when with impetuosity he made a nuisance of himself.

Obregon had to be reinstated in his position of vantage, and the powerful northern neighbour could not be pleased by the promotion of an upstart who had dared encroach upon the vested interests of American citizens. Carranza was intensely anti-American; but he was a Spanish colonial aristocrat, and as such could have no genuine sympathy for social revolution, not even of the liberal variety. But he was a bold gambler, who played with large stakes. His daring opportunism gave me an opportunity to make an equally opportunist experiment in Leninist revolutionary strategy, even before I met the arch-revolutionary opportunist.

My association with Carranza was an interesting experience. The difference in age and our respective stations in life precluded formal social relation. Nevertheless, there developed a mutual trust although no personal intimacy was cultivated. During the latter part of my sojourn in Mexico, we met frequently, subject to the socio-political convention and diplomatic inhibition, which stood between the President of a bourgeois republic and the General Secretary of a Socialist Party still outside the pale of respectability. Carranza's usual attitude of dignified reserve did not prevent me from speaking freely.

Many years later, it dawned on me that an affinity of cultural traditions made the strange relation possible. It was a typical case of *noblesse oblige*. Carranza personified the Christian culture of the European Middle Ages, which seems to have appealed to the *Brahmanical* tradition of intellectual aristocracy. My socialist conscience struggled hard to deny to myself the

empirical truth that, while I felt at home in the company of a feudal aristocrat, the uncouth comrades never ceased to embarrass me. It was not a case of bourgeois snobbishness, which I detested heartily. The conventionalities of bourgeois culture were assiduously practised by the Mexican middle-class. I found them quaint, artificial and sometimes devoid of sincerity. Curiously enough, they were regarded as the badge of respectability and aped by the avowed enemies of the bourgeois society.

For example, *La Mujer Moderna* publicly smoked black cigarettes and was generally suspected of indulging in other kinds of libertinism; but at the same time, she meticulously simulated the *grande dame* by letting men kiss her hand instead of shaking it. And drawing room revolutionaries, who breathed fire against the bourgeoisie through bad poems, passionately pressed her finger-tips to their lips which evidently wanted so much more. So-called intellectuals, embittered by failure in life, fiercely preached anarchism, but punctiliously wore celluloid collars, often soiled, as the badge of respectability. On Sunday mornings, they would compromise their anti-clericalism to accompany piously catholic wives to the Church. On that occasion, they never failed to put on frayed striped trousers, shabby cutaway morning coats and aged top hats. White spats worn on black shoes and yellow gloves, carried in hand, completed the conventional armour of the disguised revolutionary knight-errants. Even the Marxian beard of Santibanez covered an equally Marxian soiled shirtfront. The hallmarks of bourgeois respectability also penetrated the proletarian ranks. Executive members of the Socialist Party attended committee meetings, not to mention formal social gatherings, in conventional Sunday clothes.

The experience of these curiosities sowed in my mind the seeds of heterodoxy and heretical thoughts which shocked the new-found faith. Although the fanaticism of a convert quietened conscience and silenced doubts, I could never be a fully orthodox faithful. The theoretical deviations of my Mexican days might be explained by an inadequate knowledge of the scriptures. The ideal of social justice was attractive by itself. One need not swallow the whole Marxist system in order to be

an advocate of social revolution. My approach to Marxism was neither political nor economic; it was philosophical. Several years later, a brilliant Russian Marxist expressed the opinion that any original contribution to the Marxist thought must be to its philosophical aspect, and that barring Plekhanov and Lenin, no European had until then made any. He expressed the opinion in course of a discussion of my doubt about the finality of economic determinism and the relation of culture to classes or to class antagonisms.

The striking phenomenon of proletarian revolutionaries cultivating conventional respectability was not confined to Mexico. I was surprised to find it also in Europe, where proletarian class consciousness was more a matter of intelligent judgment than of elementary emotion. If the ruling class puts its stamp on the pattern of culture, the proletariat must necessarily be bourgeois, culturally. That seemed to be the empirical truth which precluded the possibility of a new culture, new forms of human relations, new moral ideals, resulting from the proletariat capturing political power. Those reflections drove me to the conclusion that only the tradition of an older, more spontaneous, less conventional culture could enable one to reject the artificialities and vulgarities of the bourgeois social order, and look beyond for a richer pattern and higher ideals of human culture which will not be constricted by any class prejudice. Concretely, I felt that an aristocrat, intellectually emancipated from the prejudices of his class, might be a more disinterested and culturally more Dyonisian social revolutionary than the most passionately class-conscious proletarian. In other words, intellectual aristocracy, being a common human heritage, could alone lay down the foundation of a really new social order.

It took years for these unorthodox ideas to develop in my mind. Meanwhile, I believed politically according to my new faith, a staunch socialist, as much as any, and getting redder every day. But socially and in personal relations amongst friends, I tried to live up to my heretical views; the healthy contagion was encouraging. In Mexico, we built up a small cosmopolitan community of free human beings. Later on, in Europe, communist friends taunted me as more European than

the natives, when I criticised their bourgeois habits and prejudices.* I believed that the characteristically European culture reached its high water mark in the eighteenth century. It was the age of intellectual aristocracy, which heralded all the revolutions which took place since then. The nineteenth century was the age of the bourgeoisie; Karl Marx was a bourgeois; and so, therefore, were his disciples and followers.

The Mexican Socialist Party, rather its Executive Committee, recovered from the surprise at one of its members' elevation to Federal Ministership by giving him a banquet in the typically bourgeois fashion. I intervened to prevent the indiscretion of inviting the President of the bourgeois republic to a politically motivated social function of the Socialist Party. The spectacular march of events during the short period of half a year naturally turned the heads of the more ambitious socialist leaders. Obscure agitators, if not actual outcasts, of yesterday, they behaved as if they were the masters of the situation. Some of them went to the extent of proposing that President Carranza should be asked to join the Socialist Party to prove his *bona fides*. However, supported by the moderating influence of Santibanez and Don Manuel, I managed to restrain the impetuosity of the wild men without dampening their enthusiasm.

Don Manuel deputised for the President as the official guest at the Socialist Party banquet. He drew thunderous applause by mentioning in the course of his after-dinner speech that, soon after the Socialist Conference, Don Venustiano wanted to appoint a Minister of Labour and had enquired if a suitable candidate could be found amongst the Socialists. The chief guest appeared to be somewhat deflated. His dramatic rise to prominence then was not entirely due to his own merit — not a reward for the record of his short-term State Governorship. It is doubtful if he ever realised that he made rather a nuisance of himself. However, I intervened with a short speech to soothe the feelings by disowning any credit and to reassure Calles that he was in power on his own right, and none claimed it by proxy. But my sincere modesty did not seem to carry conviction with others, although Calles was satisfied. After all, he was the Minister.

A programme of legislation for the protection of labour, particularly against exploitation by foreign imperialist capital, was drawn up, of course, by the Minister in consultation with the head of the legislative branch of the State. The principles having been approved by the President and the full Cabinet, I was asked to draft the bills with the co-operation of trade-union and socialist leaders. The texts were then to be finalised by the legal experts and law officers of the Republic. One of the proposed measures was to legalise strikes to enforce the workers' demand for collective bargaining. As soon as the news leaked out, industrial centres throughout the country were swept by a wave of strikes with all sorts of demands, legitimate, imaginary, coercive. That was the Mexico of my time.

A general strike on the petroleum fields and in the neighbouring ports, from where the strategic material was exported, would create an inflammable situation. The war in Europe had reached the decisive stage. The eastern front having collapsed upon the assumption of power by the Bolsheviki in Russia, the Germans had mounted their last desperate offensive to break through in France. The least interference with the flow of supplies across the Atlantic at that crucial moment tipped the scales. Therefore, it was almost certain that, should there be any threat to stop the flow of petroleum from Mexico, U.S. marines would be landed to counteract it. As a matter of fact, ready for the emergency, war ships were cruising off the ports of Tampico and Veracruz. If the issue was forced by any rash act, the Mexican Government would be discredited because it simply had no power to prevent American marines occupying the entire oil fields.

It was an occasion for statesmanship. How to save the situation without losing face? I suggested that the Minister of Labour, vested with emergency powers, should rush to the scene to handle the crisis on the spot. Carranza was nervous to unleash the watch-dog of labour. Would the latter bear in mind that he was to bark as loud as he pleased, but not to bite? I would accompany him to see that the interests of the proletariat were protected according to the programme of the Socialist Party, without endangering the safety of the Republic. The President was reassured, and signed the decree investing

the Minister of Labour with the emergency power to bark fiercely. On the way, something unexpected happened — very dramatic, very Mexican.

We had to pass Orizaba — the centre of the textile industry owned by French capitalists. There was a strike involving about 12,000 workers. The train halted overnight; early in the morning, I went to the town to see the local trade-union leaders and report the situation to the party headquarters in Mexico City. I was told at the local party office that, having heard that the Labour Minister was passing, a deputation of strikers had gone to the station to see him. I hurried back to find the Ministerial Saloon surrounded by a crowd shouting slogans; presently, the Minister appeared at the door, and started making an inflammatory speech, in the course of which he informed the delirious audience that he had sent for a representative of the employers to tell them what the Government proposed to do for the protection of labour.

After a few minutes, the watch-dog of labour fiercely faced two well-dressed men inside the saloon. The latter looked frightened and sulky at the same time. The interview was short, but not at all sweet. Standing majestically in front of the visitors, with one foot on a chair, the Minister, who was also a General, barked that “the Government of the United States of Mexico would no longer allow exploitation of labour by foreign capital. You are hereby ordered to settle the dispute to the satisfaction of the workers”. The employers’ representatives mumbled that the demands were unfair and exorbitant; they would rather close down the mills. The ministerial retort was a threat to bite: “In that case, the Government will take over and run the mills.” The visitors were dismissed with an imperious gesture. During the short interview, the General had taken out of the holster his pistol and laid it on the table. The handle of the weapon was decorated with a mother-of-pearl.

I went out to meet the prospective victims on the station platform. It was easy to persuade them to make a compromise. In their presence, I told the strikers’ delegation that the employers had provisionally accepted their demands; therefore, the strike should be called off the day after. The Socialist Party would carry on the negotiations for a final settlement of the

which overthrew the Carranza Government in 1920 gave some temporary hope and comfort to the Catholic Church as against the threat of a wholesale confiscation of its extensive properties, and secularisation of education decreed by the *Querretarro Constitution*. But the reactionary interlude ended when in 1922 Calles rose to the Presidentship of the Republic. He delivered a frontal attack on the Catholic Church, which had been the stoutest bulwark of the *status quo* ever since the Spanish conquest.

However, even at the time of Carranza, when the Church enjoyed only a quasi-legal position, it was a standing menace to the yet unstable democratic order. Operating through the confessional, the priesthood incited the women against their husbands who were known to be hostile to the Church. Leading members of the Socialist Party were all placed on the black list. None of them even conformed with the hypocritical practices of drawing-room revolutionaries aspiring for social respectability. But mostly working men themselves, their wives were ignorant and illiterate. As such, they were saturated with religious prejudices, prone to plague the menfolk under priestly instigation. A particular case of the disturbance of domestic harmony due to priestly interference gave me the occasion for an amusing experience.

Juan Baptista Flores was a member of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party. A cobbler by trade, he was a robust artisan of the jolly mediaeval European type rather than the melancholy native Mexican. He was tall and well built, with a handsome dark face, adorned with a magnificent pair of moustaches which seemed to enhance his masculinity. As a matter of fact, he was said to be Don Juan amongst the women of his social circle. Whatever might have been his success in extra-marital relations, masculine attractiveness failed him when he had to deal with his own wife. She was the common type of female of the urban mixed race, illiterate and generally ignorant. The dark brown pigment of the skin and facial features testified to her native parentage, while influence of the faint touch of Spanish blood expressed itself in a bigoted attachment to the Church. Though she spent more time at the shrine of the Mother of Jesus than at home, her religious

bigotry and superstitious practices made the domestic life of an avowed atheist rather irksome. Flores believed and his comrades agreed that she pestered the life out of her husband on the injunction of the priest. However, the experience being the common misfortune of all revolutionaries in Catholic Mexico, Flores did not complain. But presently the pious lady precipitated a crisis in his life.

They had two or three children, and the next one was coming. As a silent protest against priestly tyranny, exercised through his ignorant wife, Flores, as he told me later, had resolved to claim the coming child for his own. The elder ones had all been properly baptised in the Church, and to avoid a domestic crisis, the irreligious father attended the ritual, though with great reluctance. Believing that there was some witchcraft in the ceremony, that it made of the child a lifelong slave of the priest, Flores was determined to rescue one to be dedicated to the cause of social revolution and human liberation.

The child was born, and the day of its baptism drew near. It seems, at the crucial moment, courage failed Flores. He was afraid of facing the pious vixen with his sacrilegious intention. He approached me for advice and help in carrying out his resolution. The mother would rather kill the child than allow it to be placed on the road to hell. She would run away from home with the infant and both fast unto death at the foot of the altar of the Mother of God. (With the backward Catholic masses, the Virgin Mary is the supreme deity; Christ being her son is naturally subordinate). How to avoid the scandal without Flores having to abandon his resolution? He also became dramatic. He would rather kill himself than be so humiliated. Having expressed my fullest sympathy with him, I asked for time to think over the delicate situation and plan a possible way out.

The brotherhood of American Radicals and a few selected members of the Socialist Party Executive met in a council of war to plan an assault against the tyranny of the Church. The more adventurous warriors advocated the picturesque strategy of kidnapping the child to be rescued from the witchcraft of the baptistry. But the problem of the physical survival of the infant

after its soul was saved compelled rejection of the plan. A good deal of deliberation led to the general agreement that the only feasible way out was to stage a mock baptism. There was plenty of talent amongst the American Radicals to plan the play and stage it. As a matter of fact, the very idea fired their poetic imagination and stimulated histrionic ambitions. But the initial problem had still to be solved: How was the conservative lady to be persuaded to take the infant to a new place for baptism? Old Santibanez, as the patriarch of the party, undertook the difficult task. He would not take anybody into confidence, but was sure of delivering the goods.

The plan was to hold the mock ceremony in the drawing room of my house. The play was still to be planned in detail, roles distributed and learned and the stage actually set. Pending the preparations, Santibanez accomplished his task with no difficulty. The credulous lady avidly swallowed the story that Socialism being a movement for the salvation of the poor, it had naturally received the blessing of the Pope. Accordingly, the priest of an exclusive Church in Colonia Roma had received an order from His Holiness to baptise her infant, which was the child of a leading Socialist. The purpose of the holy order was symbolic; it was to demonstrate to the proud rich inhabitants of Colonia Roma that the Kingdom of Heaven belonged to the poor and the meek and the faithful.

It was a longish room with several tall windows looking on the street, quite suitable for transformation into the semblance of an exclusive private chapel in a fashionable church. The walls were draped all in red. A gilded Louis XV table, placed against the wall at the far end of the room, served the purpose of pedestal of the Mother of God. The American Radicals' talent for stagecraft filled in all the details of an appropriate appointment, and lively imagination imitated the atmosphere of a Catholic Church. Flickering candles, soporific fumes of incense, so on and so forth, everything was there. A copy of *Capital* by Karl Marx, neatly wrapped in a piece of red silk cloth, occupied the place of the Holy Bible on the altar.

Charlie was the technical director of the show as well as the stage manager. He had allotted to himself the role of the presiding priest. When the curtain rose, that is to say, the main

door to the room on the entrance hall of the house was thrown open by the usher, Charlie was standing by the shrine, meticulously dressed in the appropriate black robe. But for the nose of his race, he looked every inch an ordained preacher of the Gospel on the point of saving a soul. Green satin-upholstered gilded chairs, placed in rows like pews, were occupied by leading members of the Socialist Party together with their wives, all properly clad in sombre black.

My cook Maria led Senora Flores carrying the infant into the room and conducted her down the passage in the middle to the shrine. While all the rest in the room looked sepulchral, I detected the flicker of a sardonic smile on Maria's broad handsome face. A pure-blooded child of the soil, she was a pagan, although she never missed the weekly mass. But she kept away from the confessional, suspecting that no priest was immune to the temptation of taking liberties with penitent young women. The fact is that, being a pagan, she was never tormented by the sense of sin.

Charlie played the star role like a consummate actor, to the point of touching the infant's forehead with the Book of the Gospel of the Social Revolution and punctuating the ritual by reciting a verse in the Jewish Jargon which the illiterate mother must have taken for blessings in Latin.

When it came to naming the mortal coil of the salvaged soul, there was no unanimity. The father wanted it to be named after Rabindranath Tagore. The more revolutionary and less sentimental would choose Lenin-Trotsky. The majority voted for Manāvendranath. The priest, of course, had the last say: his was the voice of God. But it needed some prompting. Raising his arm over the head of the infant, in a sonorous voice, suppressing a hearty laugh, Charlie announced: "I name thee Karl Marx Flores." There was all-round satisfaction. Only, none could divine what was going on in the mind of the poor deluded woman. Otherwise, everybody was happy, spontaneously, so much so that the priestly refrain "Amen" was drowned in a lusty "Long Live Social Revolution".

A small crowd had gathered in the street. It was a strange spectacle in the highly respectable and conventionally religious

A Mysterious Visitor

DURING THE last months of 1918, exciting news kept on coming across the Atlantic. The Central Powers were defeated in the war. A revolution in Germany overthrew the Kaiser, who fled from the country. Defeat disintegrated the German army. The dilapidated structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire also collapsed. The hoary Hapsburg Monarchy fell along with a number of other old dynasties which ruled in the States of the German Empire even after Bismarck. The most important event was the German revolution. In October, the Communists, who at that time called themselves the Spartakists, made an attempt to capture power and set up a Soviet Republic under proletarian dictatorship on the Russian model. All the parties, from the monarchists to the Social Democrats united against the Communists. The Social Democrats did not want the revolution to go farther than replacing the monarch by a democratic republic. The Communists were too weak to succeed by themselves, and Russia was not yet in a position to help. If the revolution went further, the victorious allied armies would have intervened, as they did in Hungary. The Spartakist leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were brutally massacred by Prussian army officers, and local insurrections were suppressed bloodily also by detachments of the defeated army.

The communist revolution held out a little longer in Munich, to be killed eventually by the Catholic Bavarian peasants refusing to feed the city. Inspired by the Russian example, the pioneers of the communist movement practically in all the capitals of Central and Eastern Europe tried to imitate what had happened in Petrograd during the "ten days that shook

Irwin with his poetic imagination exclaimed: "Gosh, he was like a snake-charmer!" No wonder that the young fellows felt like that. For them, Russia was the revolutionary heaven and a Bolshevik, a god. Was it not great luck to have been the first in the New World to meet one? I was not quite untouched by their emotional exuberance, but I did not share their worshipfulness. It would certainly be an interesting experience to meet a Russian Bolshevik and get some first-hand information about what was happening in that distant country. But why did he come all the way to Mexico and want to meet me of all people? And how and what did he know of me? It was all very intriguing. However, there could be no harm in seeing him. I was not afraid of snake-charmers, because I did not believe in their magical power. But it might be wise to take some precaution against any possible danger. I had been confidentially informed that there were several attempts to kidnap me.

The decision was made: I would call on Mr. Brantwein at his hotel the next evening. He was to be informed accordingly when he returned to the *Heraldo* office. Charlie should come out of the gate to see him off. I was to wait across the street to have a look at the man from the moon. The light-hearted Irwin joked: "His looks? If you were a girl, you would fall in love with him". Charlie's budding Bolshevik soul deplored his friend's levity and my die-hard conspiratorial habit. What could I possibly make out just from the looks of the man? But, I protested, you said that he did not look like a Bolshevik; of course, if he really had any serious business in this strange land, he would come disguised. I wanted to find out if he was a camouflaged Bolshevik or a genuine gentleman. Once again I annoyed my friends; their revolutionary loyalty was outraged, and they deplored the lingering reactionary bent of an oriental mind. We finished the discussion and parted, pending further development of the dramatic situation, each having expectations according to his predisposition.

Mr. Brantwein called at the *Heraldo* office next morning at the appointed hour, and was pleased to have my message. In the meantime, something had happened, interesting though not of any great significance.

I asked Charlie if they had talked about me the previous evening. Of course, they had. Mr. Brantwein was full of admiration for the young Hindu who had acquired an important position in the public life of a foreign country. But he would not say anything about his business with me. What he did say was that this young Hindu should go to Russia; Lenin would like him. Though still suspicious about the whole affair, I was flattered. The idea of going to Russia and be liked by the great Lenin was intoxicating.

I was waiting impatiently for the day to end. Some sort of a fever seemed to have attacked my body. I felt the blood rushing through my veins — in anticipation of meeting the first Bolshevik. For some unknown reason, I had no longer any doubt that the man was a Russian Bolshevik, and it was evident that he wanted to meet me. Whether that was his sole purpose in coming to Mexico was still to be proved. In any case, until then he did not seem to have any other business.

I had picked him up when he came out of the *Heraldo* office in the morning and followed him until lunch time. He wandered aimlessly, looking not at shop windows, but at the people, and returned to his hotel. A man of distinction and rather striking personality, he nevertheless appeared to be dejected, particularly so when he called at the post office and found no letter waiting for him. He was obviously disappointed and worried. A man of early middle age, hardly above forty, he rested on the walking stick from time to time. I felt like stepping up to him and asking him if he was unwell. But discretion counselled caution; I must wait until the evening. However, I returned from my imitation Sherlock Holmes expedition with a liking for the stranger and a keen desire to cultivate his acquaintance. Somehow I got the feeling that there was a good man in some distress. He probably needed help and possibly hoped to get it from me. I could not imagine what sort of help he might want, but I knew that in those days in Mexico I could do a lot to help any good cause. And presently it did turn out that my relation with the Bolsheviks began by helping them financially, instead of receiving the legendary Russian roubles as reward for the revolutionary profession.

manners of the man, not dishonest nor deceitful, but a bit pompous, and stagey.

It seems that when I came he was dressing for dinner. The man he ordered out must have been a temporary valet hired with the room; to be more accurate, it was a suite of rooms. Having seated me in an armchair, with broken springs and shabby upholstery, Mr. Brantwein excused himself to withdraw into the bedroom and presently returned clad in a gorgeous silk dressing gown, which only accentuated the ravaged beauty of the once-upon-a-time well appointed drawing-room. If he only looked like the Bolshevik of popular imagination, the room might be taken for a replica of Russia after the revolution — the uncouth new ruler lording it over the ruins of the old order.

There was an awkward moment of silence. Mr. Brantwein did not sit, but paced up and down the room, fidgeting mentally, I surmised. But why? Suddenly, he stopped in front of me and said with disgust: "It is a filthy place. Is it not? All these gaudy ruins must be swept away by the towering rage of the proletariat." Another surprise — such a passionate declamation from a man who looked every inch a bourgeois. He again read my thought and gave me yet another surprise: He did not know when the new world would be built, if ever. Meanwhile, it was a matter of taste.

He apologised for having seated me in that chair; it must be infested with bugs. I began to feel them crawl all over me, in imagination, of course. But it was not easy to free oneself from the uncomfortable ease of the chair. Mr. Brantwein laughed and helped me out. The ice was broken and we began conversing more to the point and more at ease.

Why did he want to see me? What had brought him to Mexico? Did he know me before he came? He parried the straight questions, and suggested postponement of any business talk until he felt the ground under his feet in this strange country. And what did he wish me to do for him in the meantime? The answer was frank and disarming: "Oh, let us be friends. I feel so very lonesome, and I am in some difficulty." I proposed that then we should go out for dinner. He was cheered up. "That's a jolly idea; nothing like a good meal."

Should we go to the Italian restaurant, where he had been the previous evening with a friend of mine. No, he did not like the place although the food and drink were good. Too many long-haired males there; he detested the Bohemians. We agreed to go to a more conventional place run in the French style. He would prefer German; but there was none. Mr. Brantwein again dived into his bedroom, and this time stayed there for a longer time, presumably finishing his toilet. He was a man of very fastidious habits. That much about him I had learned already.

Looking around the drawing-room, while he was absent, I found some copies of *Gale's Magazine* lying on a table. I knew the journal pretty well, and also its editor. He was what the Americans call a queer fish, and these memoirs of my Mexican sojourn ought to be spiced with some reference to him, and his fair partner.

The majority of young Americans who crossed over to Mexico to evade conscription during the war called themselves pacifists or conscientious objectors. They were mostly cranks — vegetarians, spiritualists, nature-curists, nudists, so on and so forth. Amongst them there was a man named Gale. He was a class by himself — an evangelist of the New Thought. He actually rented a room and advertised the establishment of the New Thought Church in Mexico, where every Sunday morning he preached his sermons. By physical appearance he was quite appropriate for the role — a tallish man, slightly built, with a thin pale face, adorned by a tapering red beard. If he did not wear his cut-away black morning coat while he mounted the pulpit, one could take him for Jesus Christ preaching the sermon on the Mount. The attendance was never much more than a dozen. His wife played Magdalena by standing worshipfully at the foot of the pulpit dressed in a white flowing robe, plaits of blond hair hanging on both sides of her face. The weekly show was the talk of the town. So, out of curiosity, I went once to see it. I was told that the evangelist of New Thought published a monthly magazine named after himself — *Gale's Magazine*.

One morning, the pair called to invite me for tea at their home. It was not a very attractive proposition, but I could not

refuse without being unnecessarily rude. Mr. Gale vouchsafed, and Magdalena blushed agreement, that as pacifists for religious reasons, they were deeply interested in Indian spiritualism, and would love to hear some words of wisdom from a son of that holy land. I was in for a boring couple of hours, but could not back out. The invitation was for the next day. I came at the appointed hour and was received at the door by the charming (I thought rather insipid) Magdalena who had bundled herself clumsily in a loose garment, presumably to be taken for a *sari*. She had painted her feet red and went without shoes and wore a garland of white flowers on the head. It looked all very dramatic. The room was full of thick incense fumes, through which one could dimly see pictures of gods and saints and prophets hanging on the walls. The host led me towards one which looked like the picture of an Indian — a handsome face with sharp features and longish black hair, on the background of a yellowish circle which I imagined was meant to be the halo. Standing worshipfully in front of the picture, the host enquired if I had the good fortune of ever meeting Lord Krishnamurti. Who was he? My naive question dumbfounded the host, and Magdalena nearly fainted. Commiserating with my sinful ignorance, the host informed me that on the authority of the Great Souls who lived in Tibet, Mrs. Beasant had picked up a bright Madrasi boy as her successor and sent him to Oxford for education.

Well, It was getting more than I had contracted for, and there was no sign of tea as yet. The pious pair was visibly disappointed. I was sure that they suspected me to be an impostor, not an Indian at all. I made no secret of my impatience and asked permission to leave. Oh no, I must have some refreshments. Magdalena produced glasses of thin lemonade. Did I mind the clean beverage? They did not drink tea; it was a stimulant, not good for spiritual composure. The accompaniment was one lettuce sandwich each. One should not eat much in the evening. (The American *petit bourgeois* call the evening meal 'tea'.) The evangelist of the New Thought was always sermonising, completely oblivious of how others reacted. A worshipful listener was always there in Magdalena. At last, I got up with a firm determination to

flauntingly bourgeois tastes, I had lost all suspicion about the man. Now I was eager to get under his skin. As he would not open up, I returned to the personal question: What did he know about me before he came to Mexico? The blunt answer was the greatest surprise of the evening: Nothing. He had never heard the name of M. N. Roy. It was more than a surprise: it was a rude shock. I was completely deflated. It seemed that subconsciously I had believed that an important Bolshevik had come all the way from Russia to see me for some serious business. The bubble having burst, I instantly regained composure and asked why did he then go to the *Heraldo* office to enquire how he could meet me. There must have been a slight hint of challenge in my tone. The answer was entirely irrelevant, but reassuring at the same time. He was mighty glad to have met me and sure that the meeting would yield important results. He took my hand and pressed it hard.

But I pursued the question: How did he come to know my name within two days of his coming to the country, and why was he eager to meet a man about whom he knew nothing. Mr. Brantwein laughed, then said that in the first meeting he only wanted to get over his lonesomeness. The warmth of human contact was so much more than one could have in one evening. However, as I insisted, he would tell how he discovered me, on condition that there should be no supplementary questions for the time being. We would have plenty of time to talk; what was the hurry?

He was compelled to land in an American port. He knew the country, had many friends there. But it was not safe to stay on. Mexico was the only escape. Neither he nor his friends knew anybody there. One of his friends, a leading Socialist, gave him a warning which eventually turned out to be the clue for him to discover me. The friend had told him that many young American Radicals had escaped to Mexico; he would contact them in course of time. But he must keep away from a man called Gale.

The first day in Mexico, Mr. Brantwein went in search of newspapers; they were all in Spanish except one in English called *Gale's Magazine*. He purchased a few copies. Going

Michael Borodin

THE AMERICAN friends were naturally impatient to hear the story of my interview with the mysterious visitor. They were also a little jealous. Why should I have all the honour and they be excluded? After all, he came to them first, and they had for years dreamt of social revolution. When I told them the next day that a whole evening with Mr. Brantwein had made me no wiser about the object of his visit, they evidently felt like having been kept out of the secret. I hastened to reassure them that whoever might be the newcomer, we were old friends. Perhaps out of a subconscious spitefulness, their revolutionary credulity appeared to yield to a critical attitude towards the exclusiveness of the visitor. The born proletarian Irwin remarked that the chap was too much of a bourgeois to be a Bolshevik; that in any case he put on airs, which did not blow in the proper direction.

The proletarian poet's picturesque language put us all back in a good mood. Well, the man was there and seemed to count on our help and friendship. Until there was definite proof of his unreliability, we could not be niggardly. After all, he might be in a dangerous position which compelled him to be over-cautious. He would, indeed, find himself in a tight corner if it was known that an emissary of Soviet Russia was in the country on some secret mission. Duly flattered that he had taken us into confidence, we should wait patiently until he showed his hand. Meanwhile, we must keep the secret so as not to endanger him.

I made the remark for the benefit of garrulous Charlie, who would find it extremely difficult to keep such a world-shaking news all to himself. It would be irresistible for him to drop at

least some broad hints to particular friends, of course with the warning that they should not talk to others. He protested, and pledged to keep the secret with the utmost rigour. Thinking that he should be rewarded for the promise of good behaviour, and also to remove any possible jealousy, I suggested that Charlie and Irwin might drop in about 9 o'clock in the evening so that we could have a bite together with the guest. That would give me a couple of hours alone with him, to get out some definite information.

Mr. Brantwein did not come until it was dark, although the precaution was pointless, because the quiet streets of the exclusive Colonia Roma were well lighted. Conspiratorial habits cultivated over a long period of time tended to overdo things, as I knew from experience. Obviously, having realised that his earlier caution was useless, Mr. Brantwein followed it up by another. I was watching out of the window of the drawing-room. Hardly the taxi had pulled up, and a man in a long coat, with the hat pulled down on his face, jumped out and ran into the small courtyard. I was at the entrance before he rang. Throwing off the coat, Mr. Brantwein remarked: "What a deserted part of the town this is; one can't come here unwatched." I reassured him that there was no reason for anxiety, because anybody frequenting the house enjoyed the best possible protection. It was my turn to be mysterious, and the fellow-conspirator controlled his curiosity.

I had noticed that the taxi had not been paid off and enquired if Mr. Brantwein meant to keep it waiting. He did not; only he thought it would be unwise to exhibit himself counting coins in the blazing electric light. Would I mind sending a servant to pay off the man. I rang for Maria and asked her to do the needful. Having seen through the window that she was speaking some energetic words to the driver, Mr. Brantwein said that she should not attract a crowd with her flirtation in public. I explained that she was scolding the driver for demanding more than his due.

Presently, the taxi rattled off, and I asked the visitor to make himself comfortable in "this house of yours", as the hypocritical formula of Spanish hospitality ran. The reply was equally cynical: "So you don't believe in these conventional

lies of modern civilisation? ” In the first few minutes of our second meeting, I felt a closer kinship with the mysterious stranger. He had not yet seated himself, but was standing in the middle of the room inspecting it with a look of approval hidden with feigned criticism. He was still carrying his walking stick which I resented as bad manners for a man like him. He irritated me still more by pointing the stick towards a green satin-upholstered sofa, remarking that it was not exactly a proletarian household. The rebuke of my retort was hardly concealed: Who told you it was? In fact, it was the residence of a man who was generally known as the unofficial adviser to the President of the Republic. The ironical censor received the information with frank admiration: So I was that also, in addition to being the General Secretary of the Socialist Party? Well, that was indeed creditable for a young man in a foreign country.

It was like the initial stage of a fencing duel; two strangers trying to take the measure of each other. At last, we settled down; drink was served, and the atmosphere relaxed. Mr. Brantwein appeared to be in a more communicative mood, and expressed the desire to change his hotel. That was easy; but in a better class hotel, a foreigner without anything ostensible to do was likely to attract attention before long. Strangers were suspect in a country which had suffered much from foreign intervention. Mr. Brantwein saw the point; yet, he could no longer live in that filthy place, which was beastly expensive too. Eventually, he would most probably move into a private house; meanwhile, he must take some risk, which could be minimised by clever simulation.

I felt that the moment had come to catch the bull by the horns. Why not invite the mystery-man to come and stay in the house until he made his permanent arrangements? That would give me the chance to watch him from close quarters. To my great surprise, he welcomed the offer with unconcealed relief. Until then, my impression was that in public behaviour he was rather conventional, not likely to accept hospitality as soon as it was offered. But in the second meeting, I learned much more about him. In the most nonchalant manner he said that it was, indeed, rather unusual for him to accept my invitation. But, as he had mentioned the day before, he was

in some difficulty; to explain it was the least he could do as a token of sincere appreciation.

He had reached Mexico City practically penniless, he said, and did not know how long the predicament would last. One could see that the confession was a bitter pill for a proud man. Yet, once the unpleasant truth was blurted out, he seemed to feel at ease, and dropping the temporary solemnity, laughed, though still with some embarrassment. So, I had picked up a stranded man without knowing anything about him. I could still back out; he would not insist on holding me to my rash promise. I knew he was trying to be flippant in order to get over the embarrassment. Still I thought that it was time for some serious talk. Pretending to be offended by his insinuation, not meant to be taken verbally, I rebuked; if the place was not good enough for him, I would find a better hotel; but my hospitality was offered to a man whom I expected to like on closer acquaintance. Should the expectation prove unfounded, I would have no hesitation to throw the undesirable guest out in the streets. Mr. Brantwein laughed, for the first time without any reservation, and said: "Well, we have met our match — a Marxist materialist and a Hindu spiritualist!" Then he hastened to add that he did not know anything about the East, but had heard while living in the United States that the Hindus were a spiritualist race.

That was an opening. How long did he live in the U.S.A.? He did speak with a slight American accent. He protested that he did not speak through the nose and massacre "King's English", although he had lived in "God's country" for quite a long time. He emigrated from Russia after the defeated revolution of 1905 and lived in the U.S.A. until 1918, when he returned home. The ice was broken, and I thought it was wiser not to press for more confidence. Not only to disown inquisitiveness, but also to exchange confidence, I told him something about my relation with the Mexican Government, and hinted that I happened to be in a position to help any good cause. As regards money, he could be at ease; I had laid in some reserve for revolutionary purposes. It was his turn to be discrete and not to ask any question, which must have naturally arisen in his mind.

The door bell rang, and Mr. Brantwein looked uneasy. I reassured him that it was no stranger, but the friends from *El Herald*. They were much older social revolutionaries than myself; it would be unfair for me to monopolise the company of a friend of Lenin. They were coming on invitation for supper. My stratagem for the verification of the information got through Charlie, of course, did not escape Mr. Brantwein. He guffawed: "So, Charlie has been gossiping." He was evidently embarrassed. Had he then been humbugging, I wondered. Well, time would tell the truth. For the moment, the twins walked in full of cheers and the atmosphere cleared up. Mr. Brantwein relapsed into his bantering mood, and enquired what the proletarian revolutionaries were doing in a bourgeois salon. Irwin's silent reply was to pour himself a drink, and then declare that spirit had no class. Charlie backed up his friend's wisdom by the utterly irrelevant remark that Lenin was not the first to finance revolutions with German money: Roy did it before him. I asked them to shut up and called Maria to serve food.

On instruction, she had prepared a classical Mexican meal, and knowing that an illustrious guest was expected, had done her best, and her best cooking could not be beaten in Mexico, as far as I knew. Mr. Brantwein, however, was more attracted by the cook than her art. For the special occasion, she also had not allowed the devotion to culinary art make her neglect the necessary attention to her own attractiveness. Later on, Mr. Brantwein confided that, when she came to announce: "Sir, the soup is on the table" (the Spanish way to announce that the dinner was served), he did not know if it was an invitation to embrace her or to go to the dining table. The food was too exotic for the European taste; I warned Mr. Brantwein that he must learn to eat Mexican food; otherwise he would starve. Maria would make no compromise. The gallant reply was that he would eat anything out of Maria's hand, even poison.

When we reassembled in the drawing room after the meal, Charlie and Irwin were duly surprised by the information that Mr. Brantwein was moving to stay with me from the next day. The naive Charlie could not contain his jealousy and

Thus began my association with a man who subsequently attained a good deal of notoriety for his activities in China. Ever since we met under the curious circumstances, until I left Russia in 1929, Borodin was one of my closest friends, although politically we often disagreed very strongly, as ultimately it happened in China. It was a human relationship with no illusion on either side. We learned from each other; in the beginning, I was the gainer. He initiated me in the intricacies of Hegelian dialectics as the key to Marxism. My lingering faith in the special genius of India faded as I learned from him the history of European culture.

A Story of Tzarist Jewels

THE DAY after he moved to my house, Borodin let me have just a glimpse into the mystery of his visit. He also told me something about himself. After the revolution of 1905, he had emigrated from Russia to the United States, and lived there until 1918, when he returned home. In America, he had studied law and philosophy, and later did teaching and research in some University. He would not be more explicit; nor did I tax his secretiveness which, though often overdone, was a second nature with the Russian Bolshevik, as I came to know subsequently from experience. Originally, it might have been necessary during the years of conspirative activity at home and abroad. But later on, it was cultivated as a revolutionary virtue, most probably to make the impression of importance.

It did not take me long to discover that, with all his admirable intellectual excellence and cultural refinement, my illustrious guest was a *poseur*. As we became friendly before long, I did not make any secret of my critical appreciation of his character and personality. He remarked that I was too cynical for my age.

While in America, Borodin had married. His wife was living in Chicago with two fairly grown-up children. He confided, obviously with a good deal of embarrassment, that since he left for Russia a year ago, he did not know how his family was maintaining itself. The first thing he wanted to do on his return to the United States was to go to Chicago. Lest that confession of domestic attachment should detract from his stern devotion to revolutionary duty, he reluctantly said something obviously more than he wanted to, as yet, at any rate. He had come to the New World with a good deal of valuables

(again he would not be more explicit). He could not carry them personally, and entrusted them to a reliable courier who was to deliver them to Mrs. Gruzenburg at Chicago.

It seemed that Borodin said more than he had wanted to. But it was too late to rectify the mistake and he took me into confidence about himself. He had lived in the United States as Michael Gruzenburg, with which name he was born in a Hebrew priestly family. He further confided that Lenin knew him with that name. The more I came to know him, the more strongly I felt that heredity had put its indelible stamp on Borodin's mind. He was born to be a Jewish Rabbi — a clever casuist, fanatically devoted to the dogmas of his faith (Bolshevism), but with no moral scruples. An assiduously cultivated intellectualism, which made a cynic of him, however, could not altogether kill the racial trait of emotionalism although he controlled it successfully, except on a few occasions when he nearly broke down. And I have always been happy to remember that those rare occasions were most probably limited to his personal relation with me, and they enriched it by diminishing its disappointment for me and bitterness for him.

Immediately on landing in New York, Borodin was spotted by the U.S. Secret Service as a dangerous alien. He could not go to see his family without exposing the courier who was to deliver the valuables. If he did, his family would be placed under surveillance and the courier also spotted when he came eventually to deliver the precious cargo. He wrote to his wife and waited in New York until he had to escape to evade deportation. His wife was to report as soon as the courier came to her. She knew that Borodin had escaped to Mexico. His daily call at the post office was with the expectation of getting a letter from her. The story helped me to understand why Borodin was so very dejected when he found no letter for him at the post office. A couple of days before, he had received from her a letter. It was a tale of woe. The family had been without any means of subsistence ever since he left for Russia.

I thought that was enough for one sitting. The proud man was evidently having a very unpleasant experience. He might have had other obligations and revolutionary duties, which should override domestic devotion. I knew nothing of them as

yet. For the moment, he would evidently like to send a word of cheer to his wife and children in distress. Even Bolsheviks sometimes fell for human weakness. I changed the subject of our conversation, and sent the distressed man to sleep after a good dinner and some better drinks. Next day, we went to the post office and sent five hundred dollars to Mrs. Gruzenburg. Borodin tried to protest, and gave in with the remark that I was a dictator.

Resuming his story next evening, he said that I had relieved him of the smallest of his worries. He hastened to reaffirm his thankfulness for what I had done, but could not expect me to do more. He had much bigger responsibilities, which could not be discharged before the mysterious courier turned up with the precious trust. Disowning any inquisitiveness about the latter, I said that if he gave me some idea of the bigger responsibilities, and provided that they were not too big for the means at my disposal, I might be of some help in relieving them, pending the arrival of the expected larger resources. Instinctively, I felt that it was a requirement of the revolution, and was very happy to have a chance of being instrumental in meeting it at least partially. Borodin was sceptical about my ability to help; but could not reject my evidently earnest offer without insulting me. So, he took me a little more into his revolutionary confidence.

In the middle of 1918, the Bolshevik Government of Russia had sent a trade delegation to Washington. Acting on the favourable report of William Bullit, who went to Russia as the personal envoy of President Wilson, the American Government had granted *de facto* recognition to the Soviet Trade Delegation. Since then, civil war had broken out in Russia, the *Entente* Powers actively intervening to support the enemies of the revolution. Bolshevik Russia was blockaded on all sides, and her trade delegation in Washington as in other countries was cut off from all connection with home. For a time, it was sustained with the financial assistance of American friends and sympathisers. But eventually, it was stranded in a hostile and expensive capital.

The distressing news reached Moscow. It was a matter of prestige. Adequate means for the upkeep of the trade delegation in Washington, as long as it enjoyed the *de facto* recognition

of the American Government, must be sent. But how? International banking facilities were denied to the new regime in Russia. The service of diplomatic couriers was also not allowed. Smuggling was the only means available. Borodin, having lived in America for so many years, was selected for the risky venture. He was to smuggle a large quantity of crown jewels to the United States. The precious cargo, of course, had to be sold illegally. The proceeds were to be used firstly to relieve the distress of the stranded trade delegation, and the remainder to finance the communist movement in the New World. But the plan miscarried at the last moment; and Borodin had to part with his precious trust in order to save it. Pending its recovery, about which he seemed to be quite confident, but which took some time, some money had to be sent to the people stranded in Washington.

Once again, I suppressed my curiosity, and offered to help, hoping to know the whole story in the course of time, and to be of some service to the cause of the revolution. Borodin was pleasantly surprised. How much money could I spare? He asked rather indiscreetly for a cultured and secretive man like himself. Recklessly, I pressed him to name the sum and assured him that it would reach Washington as fast as the post travelled. On the next day, five thousand dollars were remitted with the intimation that another instalment of the same amount would follow as soon as the receipt of the first was acknowledged. There was no hitch in the transmission, which was made through Mexican diplomatic channels and within a few days my first contribution to the cause of the revolution was completed.

Since the Bolsheviks captured power, Russian gold went to all the corners of the world, far and near, to promote the communist movement. At least once the traffic was reversed; the first instalment was soon followed by larger ones to finance the adventure of recovering the crown jewels lost by Borodin.

It seems that the initial experience convinced my guest that he had made a lucky hit by having imagined that I might be of help to him in a strange land. Although it was like the proverbial drowning man catching hold of a straw, Borodin thought that his discovery of me was the result of logical

thinking. When it came to a discussion of such points, he was inclined to be conceited, and I compared him with Meredith's Egoist. He did not resent the simile, being an Epicurean, philosophically and in taste. However, confidence in a new-found friend put an end to his secretiveness, and the revolutionary conspirator became communicative. I had to know the whole story of the lost crown jewels so that their recovery could be planned and attempted.

In those days, the Soviet Foreign Commissariat and the Communist International worked in close collaboration. The Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs, G. Karakhan, and the Secretary of the Communist International, Angelica Balabanova, both were Borodin's old friends. They chose Borodin for the secret mission to the New World. The mission was to smuggle crown jewels worth about a million roubles (approximately 5,00,000 dollars at the then prevailing rate of exchange). The precious stones were sewn in the sides of two stout leather suit-cases. With them Borodin travelled through Europe (with assumed names and false passports) to Holland where the underground West-European Bureau of the Communist International was situated. The members of the Bureau — Henrietta Rollant-Holst, the famous poetess; Rutgers, a distinguished engineer; and Wijncoop, an advocate and M.P. — were influential public figures. The astronomer Anton Pannekoek and the writer Herman Gorter were the leading Marxist theoreticians of the time. With their help, Borodin was to cross the Atlantic in a Dutch ship under such circumstances as would enable him to evade customs inspections which were very rigorous in those days.

At Vienna, Borodin had made friends with a young Austrian aristocrat who had been an officer of the defeated Imperial Army. Frustrated, disillusioned and embittered, the young aristocrat wanted to leave Europe which he believed was doomed to destruction, and emigrate to South America in quest of peace in the solitude of some remote hacienda. He joined Borodin in the transatlantic voyage on board a Dutch freighter bound for the West Indian island of Curacao to bring back a cargo of gin. On the way, the ship was detained and searched by American customs officers in Haiti. Borodin and

his fellow-passenger were taken off the boat as "undesirable aliens" and held in custody, pending investigation. After a few days, the vigilance slackened and Borodin managed to escape and reach Jamaica in a sailing boat. There he caught a ship for New York. His purpose was to draw the suspicion to himself, so that the Austrian ex-officer might be let off. The suitcases were left with him to be delivered to Mrs. Gruzenburg in Chicago whenever he would be set free and allowed to travel.

Meanwhile, pending their arrival, Borodin wanted to make the necessary arrangements for clandestine sale of the jewels in New York. He had old friends there. The East-side Jewish ghetto was the social basis of the Socialist Party. Through the intermediary of socialist pawnbrokers, the stones could be smuggled back to Amsterdam, there to be recut preparatory to being placed on the market in Paris. But immediately on landing at New York, Borodin was spotted and arrested. The Jewish community provided the Socialist Party with clever and skilful lawyers as well as clandestine connections with pawnbrokers with transatlantic link-up. Borodin was soon released on bail, and on the advice of legal and political friends fled the country to the safety of Mexico. He did not take any of them into confidence except to say that he had returned to the New World with an important mission, and that they would hear from him before long. The circumstances of the last lap of his journey from Haiti explained why he reached Mexico practically penniless.

It was undoubtedly an interesting story, which promised further adventures if the lost "property of the revolution" was to be recovered, as it must, we agreed. Borodin was anxious to send a reliable man to Haiti to ascertain if the Austrian aristocrat was still there. Then an attempt should be made to help him escape with the suit-cases, or to steal the latter with or without his connivance.

On enquiry, I discovered that an old member of the party was employed on a Mexican ship which went to the West Indies. Having taken some of the senior members partially into confidence I ascertained that the sailor was an iron-willed anarchist of the type to be enthused by the idea of a risky

First Communist Party Outside Russia

IT WAS difficult to guard the secret of Borodin's visit. We kept the news out of the press. But some members of the Socialist Party had to be taken into confidence. Their co-operation was indispensable for the attempts to recover the lost property of the revolution. The exciting news of a Bolshevik emissary's presence in the country as the guest of the General Secretary trickled down the ranks of the Socialist Party. There was a demand for an extraordinary conference of the party to define its attitude towards the Russian Revolution and make a declaration about its international affiliation. I had to introduce Borodin to a secret meeting of the Party Executive specially convened for the purpose. He felt very awkward on the occasion and refused to make any speech.

On his behalf, I explained the object of his visit: it was exploratory and to announce the foundation of the Third International, which had reverted to the term "Communist" used by Marx and Engels, to distinguish itself from the pseudo-revolutionary left wing of the reformist Social-Democratic Second International. The Inaugural Congress of the new International was held in Moscow in the winter of 1918-19. In addition to the Russian Bolshevik Party, representatives of the left wings of Social-Democratic Parties and independent revolutionary left-wing groups, such as the Spartakists of Germany, had attended the international Congress, which resolved to organise Communist Parties in all the countries of the world. But until the middle of 1919, no Communist Party had been formed anywhere. Why should not Mexico, true to her revolutionary tradition, take the lead? The response was deliriously enthusiastic. On my motion, it was resolved

to convene a Special Conference of the Socialist Party and associated organisations (anarchists and syndicalists sympathetic to the Russian Revolution) to found the first Communist Party outside Russia.

Borodin was very much pleased and wanted to transmit the news to the headquarters of the world revolution. His mission to the New World was bearing fruit. But it could not be done without the help of the Mexican Government. In those days, Russia had no postal connection with the rest of the world. The only way to transmit any news to Moscow was through the Scandinavian countries where Mexico had diplomatic agents. But that channel could not be used for our revolutionary purpose, except on the order of the President of the Republic. It was a delicate position for myself. For opportunist reasons, and perhaps also for class solidarity, Carranza was pro-German. But could I expect the colonial aristocrat's dislike for the *Entente* Powers to go to the extent of helping the Bolsheviks? I decided to take the bull by the horns.

After the defeat of Germany, President Carranza was in a difficult position. As against the powerful neighbour, he had no longer any ally. It was too late to reconcile his relation with the U.S. He had burned his boats, and must stick to his position until the bitter end. With the patronage of the powerful neighbour, Obregon was openly on the war path. In that desperate position, Carranza might welcome the possibility of an alliance with the new regime in Russia. But what concrete help could the latter offer him? However, with Borodin's consent, I planned his meeting President Carranza. He readily accepted an invitation to a dinner party, on which occasion a friend of mine who had recently come to Mexico, would have the privilege of being presented to him. The President of the Chamber of Deputies, Don Manuel, the Rector of the University, Maestro Casos, and the Foreign Minister were the other guests.

Borodin rose to the occasion and made a very good impression on the President and other distinguished guests, who were surprised to meet a highly cultured man calling himself a Bolshevik. He announced that the new regime in Russia fully

sympathised with the struggle of the Latin American peoples against Imperialism and was eager to help it in every possible manner. With that purpose, a Latin American Bureau of the Communist International should be established in Mexico, provided that His Excellency the President of the Republic consented. I was to be in charge of the proposed Centre to organise resistance to American Imperialism.

Carranza saw the prospect of his dream of a Latin American League being realised in a different form. He would not miss the opportunity and requested Borodin to transmit his good wishes to the head of the new régime in Russia. For Carranza to say so might not have been more than a gesture of courtesy. But made in the presence of his Foreign Minister and the head of the Legislative branch of the State, it could also be taken for a *de facto* recognition of the new regime in Russia. In subsequent talks, the latter two dignitaries hinted that it was meant to be so.

Borodin felt that he had scored a diplomatic victory which would raise his prestige in Moscow. Regarding the Presidential gesture of courtesy at the dinner party as the green signal, the Foreign Minister granted the facility for Borodin to contact the West-European Bureau of the Communist International through the Mexican Legation in Holland. The good offices of the Mexican Government enabled him also to get in touch directly with Moscow *via* Scandinavia, which had *de facto* diplomatic relations with the new Government of Russia. He reported his diplomatic achievement as well as the failure to carry out the original mission, but also mentioned that all possible attempts were being made to recover the loss, and that in the meantime most urgent requirements had been met out of unexpected local resources.

While writing his reports, which I transmitted through the Mexican Foreign Office, Borodin relapsed into his habitual secretiveness, sometimes approximating pomposity. He never showed me the reports nor discussed them with me. I could only guess what he wrote. The clue was the happy and optimistic mood which replaced his earlier dejection and gloominess. Now he often talked about his friends in Moscow and imagined how they would react to his reports: Lenin

would ring up Karakhan to enquire about the man M. N. Roy in Mexico; or he would send word to Balabanova to invite the Indian Marxist to Moscow.

How did I like the idea? It was, of course, very tempting. But I was also tempted to pay Borodin in his own coin and keep him guessing my intentions. Indeed, I pretended to be rather sceptical about the usefulness of my going to Moscow. What should I do there? Remaining in Mexico, I could do more for the revolution. The work started must be continued. A Latin American Bureau of the Communist International would be very useful for the purpose. It could be developed as an effective instrument for combating American Imperialism. I had persuaded the Carranza Government to back up such a scheme, and a good deal of spadework had already been done. It would not be quite proper for me to go away at that stage. I would not like to be disloyal to the country which had offered me such a generous hospitality. Once the war in Europe was over, the Americans would surely want to settle accounts with the Carranza regime which had crossed their will to dominate the New World through the instrumentality of the Monroe Doctrine. I was largely responsible for having pushed Carranza to his present position. I must be there to stand by him when in the near future he might have to fight for his life and the freedom of his country. Previously, I had worked according to my ideas; now I could continue under the guidance and direction of the Communist International.

The plan of converting the Socialist Party was still to be carried out. I was not very optimistic on that score. There would be opposition. Calles, for example, would not prejudice his chance of succeeding as President of the Republic by calling himself a Communist. Much of the apprehended opposition would be disarmed if Carranza's attitude was publicly made known. But he could not be asked to go so far. It would be fool-hardy to the extent of being suicidal. The Americans had put up with a pro-German regime in Mexico. But one sympathetic to Soviet Russia would be like a red rag to the bull. The war in Europe over, American Imperialism would militarily intervene in Mexico, if it was provided with a pretext.

For these reasons, the possibility of a semi-official patronage for the Communist Party, as enjoyed by the Socialist Party, had to be ruled out. At the same time, I did not want that the Socialist Party should split on the issue of converting itself into the Communist Party. For all practical purposes, the programme of the Socialist Party was no less revolutionary than Communists should advocate under the given circumstances of the country. Therefore, with some patience, tactfulness and behind-the-scene wire-pulling, a split of the Socialist Party could be avoided. In that case, the first Communist Party outside Russia would, from its very birth, be an effective factor in the political life of the country.

Sponsored by it, as continuation of the policy of the Socialist Party to mobilise the peoples of the Spanish-speaking New World in defence of national sovereignty and social justice, and backed up materially, though not patronised publicly, by a democratic Mexican Government, the Latin American Bureau of the Communist International could be a powerful instrument to promote the proletarian World Revolution. American Imperialism, after all, was its greatest enemy, which had to be laid low before Communism could triumph even in the Old World.

Borodin was amazed and full of unconcealed admiration when I argued my case. We had been discussing the matter for days. He was a brilliant conversationalist and skilful debater. I had guessed what was in his mind but was annoyed by his unnecessary secretiveness. He knew that he could trust me. Why should he beat about the bush instead of telling me what he might have heard from Moscow in reply to his report? Most probably, he had been directed to ask me to go there. I argued the case for my continued stay in Mexico with the purpose of forcing him to lay his cards on the table. I did succeed in that sly stratagem; but at the same time, I was myself impressed by the force of my arguments. Consequently, Borodin had to say more than he would have liked to for overcoming my reluctance to accept the proposal to accompany him to Moscow. He had to tempt me with the prospect of more exciting work there. But he also wanted that the programme of immediate work in Mexico must be

completed before we left, I, in quest of more alluring adventures and he, to report that the failure of his original mission had been compensated by unexpected political achievements. So, with a tacit agreement about our future movements, we turned to the plan of founding the first Communist Party outside Russia. That by itself would be a feather in the cap of any Bolshevik emissary in a foreign land.

Before proceeding with the plan, I consulted Don Manuel and ascertained from the Foreign Minister that a Communist Party would be tolerated provided that it eschewed provocative activities which might embroil the diplomatic relations of his Government with the powerful neighbour to the north. He further confided that his Government would like the projected Latin American Bureau of the Communist International to function *sub rosa* through the instrumentality of the Latin American League to promote the purpose of the latter. That was a broad hint which could not be given except with the consent of the President. It was that, if the new Russian regime directed its supporters in Mexico to behave reasonably and act discreetly, co-operation between the two would be assured, preparatory to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations.

My consultation with Don Manuel was about the attitude of men like Calles, who had joined the Socialist Party with opportunist motives, but might not go further, prejudicing their personal ambition. I was more concerned about the attitude of others the sincerity of whose profession of social justice was beyond doubt, and whose membership of the Socialist Party was not selfishly motivated. The proletarian, that is to say, the die-hard anarcho-syndicalist members of the Socialist Party held that the parting of ways had been reached; they pressed for forcing the issue. Together with the smaller number of wiser heads, I thought differently. If the Communist Party was not to be a politically ineffective propaganda group, it must not be weakened at its birth by courting the open opposition of the honest advocates of social justice, who might not be prepared to endorse the programme of a violent civil war. Don Manuel was the leader of the numerous sympathisers and members of the Socialist Party whom I did not want to antagonize. But at the same time, their reluctance

He laughed: "Bolsheviks don't argue, but obey discipline." Immediately relapsing into seriousness, he added: "Don't forget your own country. Moscow will be on the way." An entirely new vision flashed before my mind. It was of a new chapter of my life.

mysteries of the revolutionary faith and lead me through the intricacies of the labyrinth of its philosophical background. It was an intellectual challenge to the tradition of my Brahmanical heritage, and, as I discovered before long, also to die-hard cultural Nationalism, still lingering in my subconscious mind. As a devout revolutionary, I was a willing pupil, but I was also a rational human being, who aspired to think for himself. It was no easier for a born heretic to accept a new faith, albeit materialist and atheistic, than for the Biblical camel to pass through the eye of a needle. It was my last resistance to Marxism.

The attempt to recover the lost jewels was a slow process. We had to wait patiently for weeks before some report of progress or set-backs came. The news of the foundation of the first Communist Party outside Russia surprisingly did not create more sensation than scared headlines in the American yellow press. In Mexico, the repercussion was on the whole favourable. Even the Obregonista press did not try to make political capital out of the event by raising the bogey of Bolshevism. Every civil war in Mexico started with the cry of agrarian revolution. That was the central point in the immediate programme of the Communist Party taken over from the Socialist Party. Except for editing the party organ and attending occasional public meetings and private conferences, I had not much to do. There was plenty of time on hand. It was spent in daily discussions of the theory and practice of Communism, in which some selected friends participated. The discussion of the philosophical aspect of Marxism was confined to Borodin and myself. Beginning after dinner, it usually continued until late in the night. It was the most memorable period of my life. It was during the months immediately preceding my departure for Moscow that the foundation of my subsequent intellectual development was laid.

From time to time, we interrupted the discussion to transport ourselves in imagination to Central Asia. Borodin confessed that he had no idea of what existed on the other side of the Ural mountains and the Ural river, which divided the Eurasian continent. After the revolution, the vast Central Asian Empire of the Tzars was cut off from Metropolitan Russia. But the

to treat the patient. In the meantime, armed with a Mexican passport, he crossed the frontier into the United States. A messenger had gone ahead to New York and booked his passage on a Norwegian transatlantic boat. By the time those who might be interested discovered that the Bolshevik agent had quietly disappeared, he was already on the sea. Before he left Mexico, we had a conference with the Foreign Minister who hinted that he would soon take steps towards the restoration of regular diplomatic relations between the two revolutionary countries and hoped to receive before long a duly accredited ambassador of New Russia. About three weeks later, a cable came from Rotterdam to the effect that Borodin had reached there safely.

As the day of my departure drew nearer, the feeling of loss became keener. I had been in Mexico for only two years and a half. But it seemed as if I had lived there since my childhood. I never made many personal friends. Mexican exuberance, heavily tinged with conventionality, though not always hypocritical, was incompatible with my temperament. Nevertheless, I could not possibly help being moved by the facts that it was an extremely hospitable country, the government friendly beyond expectation, out of proportion to the little service that I could render out of gratitude, and a large number of highly developed individuals treated me with kindness, consideration and affection. On the whole, it was a rich and gratifying experience. In a sense, Mexico was the land of my rebirth. It is true that before coming there I had begun to feel dissatisfied with ideas and ideals of my earlier life. But it was during my stay in Mexico that the new vision became clear and the dissatisfaction with a sterile past was replaced by a conviction to guide me in a more promising future. It was more than a change of political ideas and revolutionary ideals. I acquired a new outlook on life; there was a revolution in my mind — a philosophical revolution which knew no finality.

The fundamental change in the outlook on life enabled me to overcome the emotional attachment to the land of my rebirth. The new ideal of freedom was not to be attained within national or geographical boundaries. The struggle for

Mexico City a couple of weeks ahead, and reach Veracruz incognito on the day of the departure of the ship. For the rest of the preparation, I had to take a few party members in confidence. The Acting General Secretary proved to be a very dependable man. I entrusted to him a sufficiently large sum of money to run the party organisation for a year. It was hoped that in the meantime, some one would come from Moscow to set up the Latin American Bureau of the Communist International.

Five years ago, I had left India in search of arms with naive ideas about revolution and international relations. Subsequent experience was bitter and destroyed a lot of illusions. During my short stay in the U.S.A., I became painfully conscious of the ignorance which concealed the contradiction between the social idealism of the early revolutionary movement which drew inspiration from Bankim Chatterji's *Anand Math*, and the cultural Nationalism which it also professed. It dawned on me that Nationalism, whether revolutionary or constitutional, cultural or political, relied mostly on emotion because it was intellectually weak. Its appeal, at home as well as abroad, was not to the head but to the heart. It tried to move, not to convince. While in New York, I did a good deal of reading and soon acquired a fairly comprehensive and critical understanding of the political and economic issues of contemporary history. The result was conversion to Socialism. But there was no change in the fundamental outlook, in the philosophy of life. That became evident when, in the discussions with Borodin, I put up my last resistance to Marxism from the point of view of cultural Nationalism. The Bolshevik dialectician, with his keen psychological insight, did not find it difficult to show that I was defending a point of view in which I no longer believed, that it was a sheer die-hard prejudice.

I left the land of my rebirth an intellectually free man, though with a new faith. But the philosophical solvent of the faith was inherent in itself. I no longer believed in political freedom without the content of economic liberation and social justice. But I had also realized that intellectual freedom — freedom from the bondage of all tradition and authority —

was the condition for any effective struggle for social emancipation. Before long, I might be in the position to help revolutionaries in India with arms. But I had lost faith in the original mission with which I had left India. I still believed in the necessity of armed insurrection. But I had also learned to attach greater importance to an intelligent understanding of the idea of revolution. The propagation of that idea was more important than arms. With the new conviction, I started on my way back to India, round the world.

Part 2

The New Faith

Crossing the Atlantic

EARLY in November 1919, I boarded at Veracruz the Spanish transatlantic liner, *Alfonso XIII*, armed with a Mexican diplomatic passport issued to Roberto Alleny Villa Garcia. The imposing name was not chosen to prove that the bearer of the passport was an aristocrat deserving the diplomatic status. It was a sheer accident. In order to make the procedure correct, the passport had to be issued on the presentation of papers proving the physical existence of the person concerned. I personified a brother of the comrade who succeeded me as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Mexico, who bore the name derived from a mixed parentage. An eccentric Englishman had married an aristocratic Mexican lady. The mixed parentage came in handy because it explained the flaws in my Spanish. The wayward Englishman had fallen for beauty as well as the riches of a Mexican socialite. But he had refused to learn the lingo of a coloured race. They spoke French at home.

The transatlantic voyage was an experience entirely different from my journey across the Pacific four years ago, except for the first lap. Even the biggest ships did not move so fast in those days; and *Alfonso XIII*, though the pride of the then Spanish mercantile fleet, was not in the class of luxury liners. Ordinarily, it took ten days to cross the Atlantic. Our voyage lasted two days longer, because the ship was held up by a strike of the harbour workers at Havana. It was due to call there, but only for a few hours, to pick up passengers and mail. That short stoppage was the bottleneck of my journey. That is why all the precautions were taken to make a secret of my travelling on the ship.

The Anglo-American Secret Police had made attempts to kidnap me when the Mexican Government evaded the demand for my extradition. Having figured so prominently in the Rowlatt Report, I was, of course, wanted by the British police. Over and above this, I was also a "fugitive from justice" in America. Cuba was an American protectorate for all practical purposes. The war-time practice of searching neutral ships, at the port of Havana, was still in force. If it was known that I was travelling on a ship due to call at Havana, the danger of my being taken off there was almost certain. Therefore, the harbour authorities at Veracruz had approached the Captain of the ship for protection to obviate any possible danger, and he had promised to keep me out of sight as long as the ship stopped at Havana.

The strike confronted us with an unexpected situation. Like other ships, ours also might be indefinitely held up, and I could not for days keep away from the deck without attracting attention. On the second day, I resolved to take the bull by the horns, and make an attempt to contact the Secretary of the Cuban Federation of Labour, who was a Socialist and had visited Mexico several times while I was there. The Strike Committee had posted pickets at the foot of the gangway. I managed to engage one of them in conversation. My sympathy for the strike won his confidence. He carried to the Federation Secretary the message that a friend of the latter was travelling on the *Alfonso XIII*. The hint did the trick. The Secretary came on board in the evening. He was furious at the Mexican comrades for not having given him previous information so that I was not exposed to the danger of arrest by the Yankees. However, he reassured me that our ship could sail as early in the morning as the Captain wished. The pickets were withdrawn on the ground that *Alfonso XIII* was a passenger ship, and it was not the intention of the strikers to inconvenience harmless travellers. The Captain got in touch with the harbour authorities to comply with the formalities, and we were off before dawn.

All on board were intrigued by the experience. It was not usual for Latin American labour, mostly anarcho-syndicalist, to be so considerate of the convenience of bourgeois passengers.

Only the Captain knew the secret. Discreetly, he kept it to himself. But a fellow-passenger sensed it and buttonholed me in a secluded spot to congratulate and thank me in behalf of all the passengers. He was headmaster of the German school in Mexico, going home on leave after the four years of war. Presently, I discovered that there was yet another fellow passenger who also knew the secret. He was a Mexican diplomat, a genuine one, going to Vienna, with his French wife. I had never met him, but he seemed to have known a good deal about me and my mission to Europe. His deferential attitude towards a personal envoy of the President made me feel awkward. He was my senior by many years. The conventionality wore off in a couple of days, and, assisted by the two Mexican diplomats, the Parisian wife became the centre of the small society afloat for a week on the Atlantic.

Only four years ago, I had made the longer voyage across the Pacific as a shy Catholic novice from Pondicherry. It was an ordeal. In the intervening short period, I had lived through a couple of centuries of cultural history. I had landed in America a complete stranger to the ways of life of the country. I would be a newcomer also to Europe, but culturally, it was not a *terra incognita* to me. My journey to America was meant to be the means to an end. I was not interested in the country. I halted there not voluntarily, and escaped at the earliest opportunity. I had no conscious antipathy or deliberate dislike. But spiritually still living in a different world, which I believed to be so much better, I was naturally unable to benefit by the new environment. I was going to Europe with an entirely different outlook. Therefore, the trans-Atlantic journey was enjoyable, and the perspective exciting, whereas the voyage from Asia to America had been depressing. Then I was going from the known to an unknown world. Now it was a pilgrimage; on the way, I would have the privilege to witness capitalist Europe collapsing, and, like Prometheus unbound, the revolutionary proletariat rising to build a new world out of the ruins.

Our floating international community was a homogeneous group composed of Mexicans, Spaniards and Germans.

The French wife of the Mexican diplomat was the sole representative of the *Entente* Powers. Although a Mexican citizen by marriage, she had lived most of the time in Paris, where her husband was posted previously. Therefore, she did not share the pro-German sentiment of our floating community. The Spaniards were even more pro-German. The Germans had lost the war, but not the sympathy and admiration of their camp-followers.

However, Spanish chivalry made the Parisian lady feel at home even in the company of the Germans. There were quite a few of them on board, all going home after four years of forced exile in Mexico. Most of them for all the time had no news from relatives in beleaguered Germany. They did not know what awaited them there, certainly nothing cheerful. Yet, they were a boisterous lot, who enlivened our days on board.

The schoolmaster, whom I met in Mexico, was particularly gay. He made friends with me and was inquisitive about my destination in Europe. Was I going to Germany? Which way did I intend to take? I should not risk travelling through France. For my benefit, he informed me that all the railways from Paris to Germany passed through frontier stations which were occupied by the British army. As if I did not know all that! Yet, I must be thankful for his solicitude for my safety, and could not altogether rebuff his well-meaning though slightly patronising attitude. All Germans still looked upon Indians as their proteges. None of them believed that the military might of the Fatherland had really been broken. That was simply inconceivable. They were all furious against the Jewish financiers and Social Democratic politicians who had conspired with the *Entente* Powers to betray Germany. But the great military leader Hindenburg and the master-strategist Ludendorff were still there; and the Kaiser had not abdicated; before long, he would return to Berlin. The invincible German army must be secretly preparing for a new offensive to take revenge. The wrath of German patriotism would punish the Jewish traitors and Social Democratic cowards who had signed the Versailles Treaty.

The smoking-room and bar on board the ship reverberated with this bravado until the small hours every night. It was a

voice of frustration; but now I realise that it was also the echo of the rumblings of a calamity which cast its shadow ahead. In daytime, while the temperature of Teutonic blood did not reach the boiling point with the heat of Spanish wine, my German fellow-passengers, mostly prosperous traders and well-to-do ranchers (land-owning farmers), were not in a warlike mood. Their behaviour was punctilious, though stiff and pompous. My friend, the schoolmaster, was the only intellectual amongst them. In addition to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, he carried in his face the token of having been to the University. It was a scar on one cheek. German students in the classical seats of learning like Heidelberg, even in the earlier years of the twentieth century, fought duels with rapiers. A scar on the face, therefore, came to be the badge of intellectuality. At the same time, there was a cynical belief that the scars were made by some artificial process as the duels were never more murderous than the beer-house brawl. The belief was borne out by the fact that the conventional mark of intellectuality, supposed to have been attained in a mediaeval seat of learning, was to be found on the faces of most Prussian army officers, while it was rare amongst really educated people.

Thinking that it would be helpful to have a German friend in Berlin until I discovered Borodin there, I took the schoolmaster partially into confidence. I found out from him that all the Germans would travel through Italy and Switzerland, as I also had planned to do. But I would prefer to travel alone, and meet my German friend in Berlin. We must part company anyhow at La Coruna, the small Spanish port on the north-western tip of the Iberian Peninsula, where our ship touched for the passengers to disembark and take the train to Madrid.

The Mexican diplomat with his French wife was going straight to Paris. They could travel on the ship as far as Santander, very near the French frontier. It is the most fashionable seaside resort of Spain. Madrid was my immediate destination; yet I preferred to avoid the direct route and was also tempted to see a fashionable seaside resort as the first place in Europe.

For the last two days of the sea voyage, the three of us were the only passengers on board. We could speak more freely,

and the French lady was amazed to learn that there was at least one amongst her fellow-passengers who was not a pro-German. Her husband was also surprised. Was I not going on a political mission to Berlin? It seems that he did not know that I was going further, and pro-German sentiment was not a condition for the success of my mission. I kept my secret, but told him that I had known many Germans much too closely to retain my earlier illusions about the motive of their old government. Could any sensitive man help being disgusted with the vulgar outbursts of German patriotism during our voyage? I was glad that the Imperial regime had collapsed, and was eagerly looking out for the privilege of witnessing a renascent Germany — the home of philosophy, poetry, music, science, purged of the scourge of Prussian militarism.

The wife of the Mexican diplomat brightened up for the first time since I had met her on board the ship. During the voyage, she had worn a mask of the cultivated charm of a society lady distributing impersonal favours with cold calculation to a galaxy of gallants, which included Germans who were presumably detested by her. She was amazed to know that I was not going to Paris. How could one come so near to the capital of cultured Europe and turn back? She would love to show me around and was sure that I would feel completely at home in Paris. Several years later, I discovered that she was mistaken. I did not like Paris when I went there. However, she deplored my bad luck or wrong choice, whatever it might be.

Her husband suggested that, while the ship stopped at La Coruna, we should go to the town for dinner. He knew a restaurant where fried fresh sardines were served. We had excellent food and better drink in a rather modest place on a narrow lane inaccessible to the dilapidated taxi which drove us from the harbour. Afterwards, we drove through the main thoroughfares of the town. The taxi rattled on cobble-stones and reeled from one kerb to another of badly lit narrow streets. La Coruna was certainly not a good recommendation for Europe to newcomers. When we returned to the harbour gate, the Mexican diplomat remarked that his wife had after all shown me around Paris. She was infuriated by the

remark which was either cynical or malicious. I did not know.

Santander was an entirely different world. Coming from the backwaters of Mexico, I was simply dazzled by the ostentatious display of what struck me as the vulgarities of European life. In daytime, the golden sand of the extensive beach was decorated with innumerable semi-naked beauties sprawling under brightly coloured huge umbrellas. What struck me more was that the men also went with practically no clothes, although the naked bodies of most of them could not possibly help repelling females with the least aesthetic sense. After nightfall, brightly lit broad boulevards, palatial hotels, scintillating dance halls and wicked casinos were thronged with hilarious crowds who seemed to be eager to drink the joy of life to the dregs lest they missed it the next day.

Well, I was thoroughly bewildered like Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*. Not that I was very innocent. What puzzled me was the disturbing feeling that La Coruna seemed to approximate my mental picture of Europe more than the seaside capital of one of the oldest ruling dynasties. Santander attracted the *nouveaux riches*, the disgusting excrescence of the latest ordeal of Europe, because it was the seat of the Spanish Court for several months in the year. There bourgeois vulgarity could come in contact with a decadent royalty and a dilapidated nobility.

After three days of the puzzling experience of my first direct contact with Europe, I parted company with the Mexican diplomat. His wife protested against my indecent hurry to run away from the excitement of life. I pleaded guilty on the ground that I had to keep a time-table until I reached my destination. In the meantime, I had something to do in Madrid.

The Land of the Faded Glory

TRAVELLING by the Paris-Lisbon Express, I reached Madrid early in the morning. On the short overnight journey, I was surprised by the bounty of food served in the dining car. Spain seemed to be out of Europe, impoverished by four years of war. Once upon a time, she was not only the proud possessor of a vast overseas empire; she was also the ruler of Europe. Spain is a country with a glorious past; but her present is doubtful and the future not promising. In 1919, a lineal descendant of the Most Catholic Majesties of the Middle Ages still sat on his ancient throne, when crowns were tumbling all over Europe. After the dramatic disappearance of the Romanovs, Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns, how long could the decadent Bourbons last? But the Spaniards seemed to be free from the gloomy foreboding. The time was long gone when the fate of a country was tied up with that of the ruling dynasty.

Madrid was the first European capital I visited. It was a gay city, all the more so because of the coming Carnival—the popular spring festival in the Catholic countries of Southern Europe. The merchants and industrialists had made money out of the war, and they flaunted their newly acquired riches with a reckless extravagance and graceful abandon. The numerous cafes and luxurious restaurants along the Puerta del Sol—the main thoroughfare of the city were crowded practically for all the twenty-four hours. Milk actually flowed and honey was replaced by cubes of shining white sugar which were littered on the floor. When one ordered a cup of coffee, a waiter came carrying two big kettles and poured out simultaneously boiling milk and the steaming brown brew until as much splashed on the table as in the cup; another

waiter threw on the table half-a-dozen sugar cubes neatly packed in paper. Each guest left several of them on the table to be swept on the floor. There was a similar surfeit and wastage of all other articles of food. Dandified young men lounged for hours in red plush sofas and easy chairs smoking, drinking and playing *domino* for money. It was a spectacle fascinating as well as disgusting. But I could not watch it for any length of time, because of the noise and the smoke which filled the places. But the incongruity of an oriental bazaar in the heart of a European city, crowded with people of Western habits, was so very captivating that during my first short stay in Madrid I dropped in at one after another of the cafes, whenever I could spare the time.

Spain, indeed, is a semi-oriental country. Geographically, it could just as well be a part of Africa as of Europe. The narrow Strait of Gibraltar is certainly less forbidding a frontier than the Pyrenees. Until the thirteenth century of the Christian era, the Kingdom of the Most Catholic Majesty of Mediaeval Europe was a part of the far-flung empire of the Arabs. Spain had her Golden Age before she grew rich by plundering the New World and her ruling dynasty became the leader of European reaction. That was when, as an Arab Kingdom, she was the centre of learning and culture, which inspired the rise of modern European civilisation. The University of Cordoba was the seat of the efflorescence of Arab culture of Greek heritage, which was taken over by the pioneers of the European Renaissance. Spain was the meeting place of the East and the West.

Later on, Christian bigotry eclipsed the light of Spain's past glory, and after a period of mediaeval power and predatory conquests, she receded into the backwaters of modern Europe. She has languished there until our time. Eventually, the degenerate Bourbon dynasty collapsed, but the short-lived Republic was followed by a military dictatorship which has lasted longer than any other of its kind in Modern Europe.

My keen interest in the past of Spain, however, could not detain me in the journey to the land where the present lived riotously, promising a future of a fuller and richer life. But I was not just passing through. Having taken my place in the

scheme of the great World Revolution, I had a little mission in Spain.

The First World Congress of the Communist International was only so in name. Except the *Spartakus Bund* (The League of Spartakists) of Germany, no organisation sent properly elected delegates. Virtually, the Communist Party of Russia, which until after the Revolution, was itself known as the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party, announced its resolution to found a communist world organisation and issued to the workers of all countries the *Second Communist Manifesto*. Even during the War, Russian Bolsheviks, still in exile, had maintained that the Second International was destroyed when the Social Democratic Parties voted for the defence of their respective countries, instead of calling upon the working class to prevent the War by declaring a general strike, according to its own resolution. On their initiative, left-wing Social Democrats from different European countries had met in two international conferences to denounce the right-wing leaders for betraying the proletariat and the principle proclaimed in the first *Communist Manifesto* that the working class had no country to defend; they had nothing to lose but their chains and a world to gain. Having captured power in their own country, the Russian Bolsheviks would revive proletarian internationalism in its pristine purity. The vast resources of Russia being at its disposal, the International no longer needed to content itself with passing revolutionary resolutions; it could now actually organise the revolution throughout the world. With the crusader's zeal, Lenin declared that the Russian proletariat would sacrifice itself in order to promote the cause of the World Revolution. Otherwise, what was the use of capturing power in one country?

The Second World Congress, due to meet a year and a half after the first, which had only proclaimed the resolution to organise the Communist International, was to inaugurate it. It was, therefore, a historic event — a Red Letter Day in the annals of the age-long struggle for the liberation of the disinherited. It was an honour as well as a privilege to participate in it. But I was more fortunate, having had a share in its preparation, organisational, programmatic and theoretical.

The downfall of Czarism had electrified the democratic and liberal world. The October Revolution, in the beginning, was hailed as the logical development of the process of the destruction of the old despotic order. Proletarian dictatorship was only a theoretical dogma. In practice, for a year and a half since the Bolsheviks captured power, unrestricted freedom for all reigned in revolutionary Russia. It was abused in all possible manner by members of the old ruling class under the protection of foreign powers extended through their embassies. Foreign intervention to support armed rebellion against the new order compelled the transformation of the amateurish Red Guards into an improvised army. Having captured power with the slogan "Peace, Bread and Land", the Bolsheviks did not want war unless it was forced on them. They signed the humiliating treaty of Brest-Litovsk, dictated by the arrogance of die-hard German militarism, in order to have peace so that they could implement the other two items of their simple programme. Proletarian dictatorship was not put into the practice of Red Terror until the abuse of unrestricted liberty culminated in the attempt on Lenin's life.

Whatever might be its provocation and justification, terror turned the democratic and liberal world against the October Revolution. The European Social Democratic Parties, though theoretically wedded to Marxism, had grown up in the tradition of liberalism. Illogically enough, they disowned the practice of the Marxian theory and denounced the development of the October Revolution as a manifestation of Russian despotism. Consequently, they would not join the revived proletarian International under the leadership of the Russian Bolsheviks. But at the same time, the October Revolution galvanised the waning faith in the possibility of capturing power through armed insurrection organised and led by a determined minority. Lenin's party of professional revolutionaries became the ideal of a section of the European working class movement. The splitting of the Social Democratic Parties and the organisation of their revolutionary left wings into independent parties became the condition for the development of the nascent Communist International.

The Second World Congress promised to be representative. The German Social Democratic Party, which dominated the Second International, had split towards the end of the War. The left wing, which called itself the Independent Social Democratic Party, had agreed to send delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist International. Outstanding leaders of the Socialist Parties of France and Italy were also expected to attend the Congress — Marcel Cachin and Paul Frossard from France, and Serrati from Italy. Thanks to the generally respected personality of its leader, Iglesias, who was also the doyen of European liberalism (the term is of Spanish origin), the Socialist Party of Spain enjoyed an international prestige disproportionately greater than its influence at home.

To beard the lion in his den was a part of my mission in Spain. If Iglesias could be persuaded to come to Moscow and bless the birth of the Communist International, the liberal opposition to the October Revolution would be demoralised and disintegrated. But he proved to be too hard a nut to crack by my youthful enthusiasm. The fervent faith of a new convert could not move the mountain of classical rationalism, which was interpreted by my fanaticism as senile rationalisation of reaction. The old patriarch of Socialist liberalism was surprised by the strange phenomenon of a young man from the land of ancient wisdom coming to him as a spokesman of the bloody cult of Bolshevism. But, as I lived long enough to learn, a good-natured cynicism is the faith of all consistent liberals. Sophism can lead nowhere. Therefore, the veteran liberal Iglesias soon recovered from his initial surprise and regained his native equanimity. With a benign smile, not free from a degree of sadness, he commiserated with the victims of a new fanaticism and sent me away full of righteous indignation and contempt for an old fool, as most uncharitably I thought he was.

But I must not go away from Spain without recruiting some delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist International. I was by no means beaten by the failure of my attempt to win the hardened rationalist, Iglesias for the new revolutionary faith. There was more than one string to my bow. A visit to the Anarcho-Syndicalist centre at Barcelona

was sure to be fruitful. But previous to falling back upon that last resort, I must look up more reliable recruits. There was a left wing of the Socialist Party. While still in Mexico, I had contacted its leaders through correspondence. They had taken the initiative by sending a message of fraternal greetings and congratulations to the first Communist Party organised outside Russia. They had received previous notice of my arrival. They were angry over my seeing Iglesias before them, and would not meet me openly. Because they were sure that the old reactionary would betray and the Spanish police would hand me over to the British authorities at Gibraltar. Even to an old conspirator, the suspicion appeared to be rather far-fetched and morbid. However, I had several clandestine meetings with half a dozen young men all belonging to the working class. They assured me that Iglesias had no influence in the Socialist Party, a majority of which would follow them to join the Communist International.

My mission in Spain completed, I was eager to go farther on the pilgrimage. But I had to stay on at Madrid yet for a few days awaiting a letter from Mexico which was to bring me a message from Borodin. The letter was to be written in a previously agreed code. It came as expected and was written in a cypher; but it contained a handwritten note signed by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Mexico. He regretted that, the key to the original code having been mislaid, the letter was written in a new code, the key to which was enclosed therein! Suppressing the chagrin by a hearty laugh to myself, I went out to buy a walking stick.

It was not easy to accomplish this minor mission. I had to walk the whole length of the Puerta del Sol until I found a stick long enough for me. The Spaniards were a race of warriors. Even today they are excellent horsemen. But the obvious deduction from my tiring experience was that not many male members of the Spanish upper classes were more than six feet tall. However, finally, in one shop near the Royal Palace, I found what I wanted, took a taxi and went back to the hotel. For money to pay off the driver, I put my hand in the pocket. The wallet was not there. It was a bolt from the blue. All the money I carried was in it. Of course, a duplicate

of the letter of credit could be obtained from the Bank in Mexico which had issued it in return for the cash deposited. That would take time and meant delay in my reaching Berlin. Meanwhile, I would be completely stranded. A couple of thousand dollars in cash was also in the missing wallet; and it contained the most precious possession — the passport. I could not get a new one from the Mexican Embassy in Madrid, because I carried no other document to prove my identity. It might be possible to borrow some money from the newly found local friends. But without a passport, one was totally helpless in those days, when a foreigner had to register himself with the police every week to obtain a certificate of identity.

It was obvious where the wallet was lost. I had taken it out of the pocket to pay for the stick. Immediately thereafter, I entered the taxi, just in front of the shop. The most skilful pick-pocket could not possibly perform his operation while I walked two steps across the footpath. It was not in the taxi, somehow dropped out of my pocket. All other possibilities of its loss eliminated, there remained no room for the least doubt that I must have left it on the shop counter. But would it be still there? Any other customer might have picked it up. No use speculating. I drove back to the shop and rushed in. No sooner I reached the counter than the shop-keeper stretched out his hand holding the thing. I snatched and opened it to make sure that the passport was there. The shop-keeper was standing in front of me with a broad smile, expecting to be thanked. In my excitement I forgot to express gratitude instantaneously, and made a gesture which evidently offended him. The smile on his face gave way to proud sternness. In a voice which cut like cold steel, he said: "Please, do count your money carefully, Sir: the Spaniards are no thieves." I apologised for my shameful behaviour, and tried to placate the insulted benefactor by an explanation, which most probably did not convince him. How could anyone, who was not in my position, believe that a sheet of parchment was worth more than two thousand dollars!

A couple of days later, I left Madrid for Barcelona, there to board a ship for Genoa. No further mission on the way until I reached Berlin *via* Milan and Zurich.

In Berlin, At Last

1

FOUR years ago, I had started on the journey to Berlin. In the meantime, it had ceased to be the end of my journey. I reached there at the end of 1919, no longer in quest of arms. The experience in the U.S.A. and Mexico having revolutionised my idea of revolution, I had lost the incentive to return to India in the near future.

According to my new faith, revolutions took place of necessity. No individual was indispensable. They were brought about by the operation of new social forces. The maturity of the latter was the objective condition for a revolution. Until that basic condition was created, no armed uprising should be undertaken because it was sure to fail. Social forces antagonistic to the established order must, in the first place, be politically mobilised and recruited in the army of revolution. Only then would arise the question of arming the soldiers ready to fight for liberation.

Our old idea of revolution put the cart before the horse. It attached the decisive importance to arms, and when the opportunity of getting them appeared to present itself, we believed that revolution was round the corner. We did not stop to consider the problem of recruiting men to carry arms. The number of members of an underground party was too small to compose an army of revolution.

The new idea of revolution and the mental picture of how it should take place made me feel that there was no sense in my going back to India in a hurry. From the scanty news available, I gathered that, under the economic and psychological impact of the War, social discontent was growing under the surface of the purely political anti-British nationalist

movement. Surveying the Indian scene from a long distance in the light of the Marxist theory of social evolution, I discovered the spread of class struggle in the countryside, which had been subjected to an intensified economic exploitation during the War. I further imagined that the subjective revolutionary factor of political consciousness was sure to reinforce the developing objective condition of social discontent when demobilised soldiers would return to their villages with the experience gained on battle-fronts in foreign countries. This perspective of the process of revolutionary development in India, opened up by the new faith of Marxism, was pictured in my book *India in Transition*, written two years later, as soon as sufficient statistical material reached Moscow.

While still in Mexico, I thought that the incipient social discontent in India would take time to be crystallised into a revolutionary social force. That process, which I believed to be inevitable, would result from the post-war economic development. But it could not be expedited politically; indeed, premature revolutionary political action might affect the country. I had lost interest in the limited objective of purely political Nationalism, and come to believe that not much could be achieved unless the middle-class agitation was backed up by a mass movement; that national independence could be attained only as a stage in the development of the inevitable social revolution. Pending the unfoldment of the process in India, I had found a field of fruitful activity in Mexico. Apart from the immediate satisfaction, the experience would qualify me for my share in the Indian revolution, when the time came.

But having outgrown the prejudice that the accident of being born in one particular country imposes the moral obligation to prefer it to any other, I might have stayed on in Mexico indefinitely, had it not been for the attraction of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Revolution. On the way, I had to pass through Berlin, which was once to have been my journey's end. By the time I came there, it was no longer the Mecca of Indian revolutionaries, the place I was so very eager to reach until three years ago. But it was no disappointment for me, because I no longer wanted what I did previously.

At the end of 1918, the final grand German offensive on the Western front having failed, Ludendorff threw off the sponge, and Hidenburg advised the Kaiser to sue for peace. Defeat rapidly disintegrated the German army, until recently believed to be invincible. The mighty war lord who had terrorised Europe by brandishing the mailed fist, got funky and escaped to neutral Holland to save his skin and a considerable part of his personal treasury.

During the whole period of the War, the German navy, except the submarine fleet, had remained in the safety of the Kiel Harbour, entirely undamaged. Ludendorff having declared early in October 1918 that the army could no longer hold the western front, the General Staff of the Navy resolved to defend the honour of Germany by dashing out in the open sea and engaging the British fleet in a last-ditch battle. "The Death Cruise" of the Grand German Navy was held up by the sailors who rose in a mutiny, refusing to share "honourable death" with the officers. The Red Banner was hoisted on the Flagship of the Admiral. On November 9th, the mutinous sailors went ashore to join the workers in a mighty demonstration. Thus begun, the revolution spread like wild fire to the great northern ports and industrial centres.

On the same day, in Berlin, soldiers joined a mass demonstration, having refused to fire on it. In the afternoon, a vast mass of workers, soldiers and sailors appeared before the Imperial Castle guarded by the most loyal corps of the army. The castle guard lay down their arms and went over to the revolutionary demonstrators, flying a forest of red flags. At that dramatic moment, the Kaiser's abdication and flight were officially announced.

While the Social Democratic Party, under the leadership of the former saddle-maker Fritz Ebert and Philip Scheidemann, backed up by the liberal members of the old order, was trying to take over the decrepit state provisionally, the Spartakist chief, Karl Liebknecht, just out of prison, proclaimed from the balcony of the Imperial Palace the establishment of a Soviet Republic on the Russian model. The dramatic declaration was lustily applauded by the largest crowd ever gathered in Berlin. An officer of the Castle Guards

tore off his ribbons and hung out an imperial red blanket from the balcony.

At the same time, a band of armed workers broke into the Reichstag building, where the last Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, was entrusting Ebert with the task of forming an interim Social Democratic Government under the Crown Prince. They got hold of Scheidemann and dragged him out to speak to the crowd. The Spartakist leader had proclaimed the Soviet Republic. The Social Democrats, opposed to violence and dictatorship, must make a bold counter move. While his senior colleague was committing the party to a constitutional monarchy, Scheidemann declared: "The old and rotten monarchy has broken down. Long Live the German Republic!"

But the surging tide of Red Revolution swept over the capital. The Social Democratic leaders got panicky and considered the idea of removing their fortuitous nascent Republic to Kassel, where the headquarters of the defeated Imperial Army was situated. Although the impetuous Ludendorff had withdrawn to Munich, there to lick his wounds and hatch devilish plots against the revolution, the old foxy Hindenburg remained at Kassel, surrounded by the elite of the Prussian military caste, watching from a distance the ominous developments in Berlin.

The whole of the year, 1919, was a period of fierce civil war which followed the revolution. By the time I reached Berlin, the Versailles Treaty had been signed and a sort of precarious order established on the basis of the Weimar Republican Constitution. An ex-saddle-maker as President of the Republic had replaced the Emperor, who not only claimed the inheritance of the proud tradition of the mediaeval warriors from Charlemagne to Friedrich the Great, but aspired for the status of the Roman Caesars. A middle-class intellectual, Phillip Scheidemann had taken the place of Bismarck as the Chancellor (Prime Minister) of Germany. The Allied Control Commission, stationed in Berlin, was the supreme authority according to the Versailles Treaty. Branches of the all-powerful Commission were established throughout the country to enforce the term of a complete disarmament of the defeated enemy.

Platz, the nerve centre of the city traffic system. The vast but gloomy station was swarming with military officers, German as well as Allied. The former bore the shame of defeat with affected dignity, which often verged on insolence. I was surprised that the Allied officers put up with it, though not always with good grace. But generally, a degree of civility marked the interrelation amongst the members of an international military caste.

By the time I came out of the station, the few dilapidated taxies were commandeered by men wearing the largest quantity of gold braids and ribbons; Berlin was still a happy hunting ground of military men, those of the higher ranks dominating the scene. A poor civilian, an obscure foreigner to boot, had to hire a rickety vehicle drawn by a horse which could hardly stand on its legs — a gaunt frame of bones covered by almost hairless skin. If I knew my way to the hotel and did not have some luggage to carry, I would have preferred walking. However, a good deal of merciless whipping convinced the helpless animal that life would be less intolerable if it jogged along. Fortunately for all concerned, the distance was very short, less than half a mile; our steed made it within a quarter of an hour, and I was dumped with my luggage in front of the imposing swing-door of a large four-storey building.

The huge lobby, visible through the glass door, was crowded with military officers. After some hesitation, I ventured nearer to the entrance, and asked the liveried footman to take my bags. He grunted that there was no room and disdainfully turned his broad back on a lowdown civilian standing in ankle-deep slush at the risk of catching pneumonia. I got angry, pushed the chap, a typical German drill-sergeant, aside and forced my way in. Walking up to the Manager's counter, I spoke rather loudly in French: "I am a citizen of a neutral country, just arrived in Berlin," and demanded a room in the hotel. A number of ornate gentlemen nearby turned their heads to have a look at the civilian intruder. Presently, one of them stepped up to me and enquired for my nationality. He spoke French, but obviously he was a German. Giving him the monosyllabic answer: "Mexican", I pulled out my passport and shoved

it under the nose of the reception clerk. The officer took a furtive look at the impressive sheet of parchment, and murmured at the clerk: "Please try to accommodate the gentleman." The latter's attitude immediately changed; very politely, he pleaded inability to do anything for the night. If I could call next morning, he might be able to give me a room. He called the hall-porter and asked him to help me out of the predicament for the night.

My guardian was a massive middle-aged man in frock coat, its lapels trimmed with gold-ribbon. His behaviour was affable and kindly. Leading me to his own counter, he enquired if I was an Indian. I replied, "Yes, but from Mexico." I avoided telling a downright lie and my friendly interlocutor was satisfied. He whispered: "We are friends; don't worry; Germany cannot be defeated." He ordered one of his underlings to bring my bags in, and took them in custody. I was to take only my handbag to a nearby boarding house, where a room would be available for the night. The Saint Peter of the Heaven into which I wanted to find my place opened his bruised heart. Fierce hatred reflected in his bloodshot eyes. He informed that the Headquarters of the Allied Control Commission was situated in the hotel. The damned foreigners behaved like lords of the realm. They have a lien on all the rooms; therefore a good many must remain always vacant to satisfy their demand any time. The Manager was naturally loth to take in civilian guests unless they were distinguished persons. But he would fix me up, and advised (not asked) me to leave with him some money. The reception clerk was a poor man, but must keep up appearances. I took the hint. How much? I imagined that it must be enough to be divided between the two, and slipped a five-dollar note into his hand. Oh, dollars! His eyes smiled happiness. I was handed over to a liveried lieutenant to be conducted to a nearby boarding house. The imperious message for the landlady was that her best room must be given to this distinguished visitor from India, who would take up residence in the Fuerstenhof from the next morning. The old order had disappeared from the streets; but it still remained enthroned in the German hearts.

The best room in the boarding house was shabbiness kept tolerably clean by the diligence of the landlady — a kindly old woman. She also lamented the shame and misery which had overtaken Germany, once so very powerful, prosperous and happy. She looked up with tearful eyes at the faded picture of the Kaiser still hanging on the wall. I felt very cold and looked at the empty fireplace. The landlady read my thought and complained that it had not been lit for a year; there was no coal. Poor thing! she would not realise that misery had overtaken Germany even when the Kaiser ruled! I was also informed that there would be no hot water — not even a jugful for washing one's face. But she would bring me some coffee and a slice of bread, but no butter; even she had not seen any for years. The brown brew neither smelt nor tasted like coffee. But it was steaming hot; I gulped it down; and warmed up the body benumbed overnight under a couple of frayed blankets. A small tablet of saccharine was served for sugar. Milk was, of course, out of the question. And the so-called slice of bread looked like a thin lump of gray earth. My first meal in Berlin was, as I learned presently, representative as far as a vast majority of Germans was concerned. A proud people had indeed fallen on bad days.

The next morning, my reception at the hotel counter was very much different. The hall porter gave me a military salute and informed me that my luggage was already in my suite. I had asked only for a room. The reception clerk also clicked his heels when he handed to me the key and ordered a porter to show me up. While entering the lift, I met the German Officer who had helped me the previous evening. He greeted me like an old friend, and passed his card — Hauptmann (Captain) X, Liaison Officer with the Allied Control Commission. Wishing that we should meet again, my new friend walked away. Evidently, he did not like to be seen fraternising with a foreigner. A corner suite on the third floor, overlooking the centre of the Potsdamer Platz was reserved for me. The passport seemed to have done me a good turn once again.

Great Expectations

THOUGH the revolutionary proletariat captured power first in Russia, according to the Marxist horoscope of history, Germany should have had the priority. As the oldest industrial country, Britain was the birthplace of the economic doctrine of Socialism. The brain-child of Karl Marx was born in the British Museum. The political ideals of Socialism and its humanist ethical inspiration were deduced from the traditions of the French Revolution. But modern Socialism attained theoretical maturity in Germany. An organised socialist movement developed first in that country. Original contributions to the theoretical system of Karl Marx were made by Bernstein, Kautsky, Hilffferding — all Germans. The number of thoroughly indoctrinated, ideologically class-conscious industrial workers was much larger in Germany than in any other country. When the first World War broke out, there were 111 socialist members in the German Parliament. The German Social Democratic Party was naturally the leader of the Second International.

Germany was also the cradle of Communism — the most uncompromising form of Marxist scientific Socialism. Time and again, the Second International had resolved to oppose war by declaring a general strike of workers in the belligerent countries with the slogan: "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains." On the outbreak of the War, the Second International was disrupted. Socialist Parties stood behind the governments of their respective countries. In France, the Socialist leader Juarez was assassinated for opposing the War. Six out of the thirteen socialist members of the Russian Duma, the Bolsheviki, were arrested

and banished to Siberia for their "defeatist" attitude. Out of the one hundred and eleven socialist members of the German Reichstag, fourteen advocated that their party should vote against war credits. But only one of them, Karl Liebknecht, disobeyed the party whip and voted according to the principle of international Socialism. Liebknecht was imprisoned; but his boldness inspired a mass anti-war movement under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin, who constituted the nucleus of the *Spartakus Bund*, later to become the Communist Party of Germany.

The war resistance movement gathered strength during 1915. The rank and file of the Social Democratic Party, particularly the younger members, grew more and more critical of the patriotic policy of the party leadership. They challenged the policy of defending the Fatherland with the question — Had not the prophet of Scientific Socialism declared that the workers had no country? Inspired by the boldness of the pioneers of German Communism, the anti-war movement provided a mass sanction for their activities.

In January 1916, the pioneers of modern Communism, who called themselves the International Group, issued a manifesto with the caption — "The Main Enemy Is in Our Own Country". This highly significant development took place when Lenin was still an obscure exile in Switzerland.

The example of the anti-war movement in Germany encouraged the crystallisation of an international left wing of European Socialism. The internationalists held two conferences in Switzerland (at Zimmerwald in 1915 and at Kintal in 1916) to plan the salvaging of Socialism from patriotic degeneration. Lenin was the leader of a small minority in both the conferences. As against the general desire to end the war by concerted action of the Socialist Parties, Lenin demanded "revolutionary opposition to war" and complete break with Social Democracy, that is, with orthodox Marxism. In opposition to the perspective of a spontaneous mass uprising overthrowing the capitalist order, Lenin had developed his theory of professional revolutionaries organising themselves into a rigidly centralised party as the instrument for capturing power in behalf of the proletariat. The leader of German

Communism, Rosa Luxemburg, rejected Lenin's theory as of the Blanquist tradition. Consequently, until after the Bolsheviks captured power in Russia, Lenin had little influence on the mass anti-war movement in Germany except a few intellectuals through the intermediacy of Karl Radek.

In 1916, Liebknecht was called up for compulsory military service. On May 1st, wearing the soldier's uniform, he appeared in front of the Potsdamer Platz Railway Station to address the troops waiting to be transported to the front. He exclaimed: "Down with the imperialist war! Leave the army! Long live Socialism!" A lone man defying the authority of the mighty Prussian army was a spectacle never to be forgotten. It electrified the atmosphere. The anti-war movement spread. The Government retorted by arresting all the leaders. But the rising tide of mass discontent could not be stemmed by persecution. Underground Workers' Committees sprang up in all important industrial centres. The movement found a response from the soldiers and sailors. It undermined the morale of the army and heralded the eventual defeat of Germany.

In the beginning of 1917, Russia became the scene of dramatic events. Heavy defeats having demoralised the Russian army, the *Entente* Powers were afraid that the Tzarist Government might sue for a separate peace. The abdication of the Tzar under the pressure of Pro-Allied politicians, who wanted to wage the war more energetically, opened the floodgates of revolution. The Bolsheviks were also "defeatists". Lenin, with his small band of followers, was allowed free passage through Germany to Russia, there to agitate for an immediate termination of the war. The pro-Allied politicians, who had succeeded the Tzarist regime, denounced Lenin as a German agent. In the beginning, he was opposed even by the Bolsheviks. But he was swimming with the powerful current of war-weariness and a general desire for peace at any price. The first session of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which met on March 27th, appealed to "the peoples of Europe for concerted decisive action in favour of peace."

On the overthrow of the Tzarist regime, a bourgeois-democratic revolution had taken place. It was a historical

necessity; the working class must support it. In an industrially backward country, it would be a stupid adventure for the proletariat to bid for power. That was an orthodox Marxist view. Therefore, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party rejected Lenin's demand for an armed insurrection. He fought his battle single-handed with the argument that the Russian masses wanted peace; the people's will must prevail, but the Bolshevik Party could not do what the masses wanted unless it controlled State power. Lenin's boldness resulted from the belief that, whatever might happen in the Russian backwaters, Germany was in the throes of the proletarian revolution, which would enable Russia to skip over the period of capitalist development within the framework of a bourgeois-democratic republic.

The spontaneous popular movement for peace, powerfully reinforced by mass desertions from the army pushed the Bolsheviks closer and closer to Lenin's position: failing to ride on the crest of the wave, they would be out of the political picture, whereas swimming with the mighty current they could capture power. The faith in the imminence of the revolution in Germany emboldened them to take the plunge. Lenin's plan was to decompose the German army with peace propaganda. Reunited behind the leader, the Bolsheviks believed that once Russia was out of the war, the working class of the *Entente* countries would force their respective governments to negotiate peace on the basis of the Soviet terms — "no annexation, no indemnity, and the right of self-determination". The faith in the historical mission of the working class was the only sanction of the Russian Revolution.

Lenin believed that the base of the world proletarian revolution was Germany. Notwithstanding his Bakuninist or Blanquist passion for armed insurrection and reliance on a wilful minority (the party), Lenin was the most orthodox Marxist. His faith in the Master's prophesy was unbounded. He did not believe that in a backward country like Russia the proletariat could hold power for any length of time. Yet he stubbornly advocated an apparently adventurist policy with the firm conviction that it would help revolution in Germany which, in its turn, would enable the Russian Bolsheviks to consolidate themselves in

power. But even then, the leadership would pass on to the German proletariat, the capital of the Communist World would shift from Moscow to Berlin.

Defending his policy of capturing power prematurely in Russia, Lenin argued: "We know that Karl Liebknecht will be victorious; we know that he will come to our assistance, and that revolution in Germany will liberate us from all international difficulties and from the necessity of revolutionary war. But the German revolution needs time. It needs preparations, propaganda, fraternisation in the trenches, a period of development."

One of the first acts of the Soviet Government was to set up a machinery to carry on propaganda among the German soldiers. Trainloads of printed matter were daily despatched to the fronts. In the name of Liebknecht, the German soldiers were asked to lay down arms and fraternise with their Russian comrades. Nevertheless, the German Government was the first to respond to the peace proposal of the Bolsheviki, of course, not out of any love for them.

America had joined the war. Vast masses of men and materials were pouring across the Atlantic to reinforce the western front. The Russian army had completely disintegrated. The new regime could not possibly build up an effective military force in the near future, even if Bolshevik peace propaganda was a camouflage. It was, therefore, no longer necessary to keep a large section of the German army on the eastern front. It must be withdrawn and deployed to hold the all-important western front.

But the German Generals who met the Bolshevik delegates at the peace conference had no intention of treating them leniently. They behaved like bullies. Taking advantage of the Soviet Government's decree granting all national minorities in the Tzarist Empire freedom of separation, the Germans demanded recognition of the independence of the Baltic States, Poland and the Ukraine as the condition for the conclusion of a peace treaty. Those provinces of the fallen Tzarist Empire were occupied by the German army. Their independence would mean German protectorate, if not formal annexation. In reply to the German demand, the Soviet delegate Trotzky

made a flamboyant speech addressed "To All", who were exhorted to compel the predatory bourgeois governments to make peace under the threat of an international mass uprising.

The Bolshevik Party would not accept the humiliating terms dictated by the arrogant German Generals. Led by Bukharin and Radek, a majority of the Central Committee of the Party advocated a revolutionary war against Imperialist Germany until the German proletariat rose in revolt. Though in a hopeless minority, Lenin pressed for peace at any price. His argument was to point out the fact that there was no longer any Russian army to carry on the war. He charged the majority with acting against the will of the people. The people had voted for peace; the Bolsheviks must obey the popular mandate and sign the peace treaty. How did he know that the people had voted for peace? Lenin retorted that they had voted with their feet: Look at the peasants in uniform, throwing away the guns and rushing back home to take possession of the land that the revolution had given them! Notwithstanding Lenin's realistic argument, the advocates of revolutionary war, to be waged with guns and the Communist Manifesto, carried the majority in a meeting of leading party members. But Lenin's realism had shaken the fantasticism of the revolutionary war-mongers. A minority, as many as were following Lenin, voted for Trotzky's formula: "No war, no peace".

To press their demand, the Germans practically annexed the Ukraine. Thereupon, the Bolsheviks broke up peace negotiations and proclaimed that, while refusing to sign a humiliating peace treaty, Russia declared that she was no longer at war with Germany. The Germans retorted by giving the ultimatum that, unless their terms for peace were accepted within forty-eight hours military operations would be resumed. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had no alternative to accepting Lenin's advice to sign the treaty. The treaty was signed, but the German army continued to advance eastwards, until they reached the foothills of the Caucasus. Their Turkish allies from the south captured Armenia. Petrograd was threatened by the advancing German army.

A few days after the signing of the peace treaty, the headquarters of the Soviet Government was moved to Moscow, which before long was hemmed in from from all sides — by the perfidious German invaders and counter-revolutionary Russian armies backed by the *Entente* Powers.

The Seventh Congress of the Bolshevik Party met in that critical situation. As against the left-wing criticism that the humiliating peace treaty had not helped the Soviet regime, Lenin reiterated the argument that there was no alternative. The German brigands could not be stopped; but the Bolsheviks had won a respite. The perspective was so very gloomy that optimism failed Lenin. He anticipated “a series of tortuous defeats”. But the German Revolution was in the offing. The Bolsheviks must somehow hold on; time was in their favour; not only Germany, but the whole of Europe was heading inevitably towards a revolutionary cataclysm — “inevitability”, the magic conception of Marxism, which sustained the courage of Lenin even when everything seemed to be lost.

The Defeat of the German Revolution

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THE faith which sustained the heroic courage of the beleaguered Bolsheviks for a whole year was not misplaced. The revolution did break out in Germany in November 1918. But it belied the great expectations of the Bolsheviks.

The responsibility for the defeat of the proletarian revolution in Germany has been thrown on the accursed heads of Social Democratic leaders by the Communists and their sympathisers. But objective historians must judge them more charitably. As followers of Karl Marx, they also believed in the inevitability of social revolution, and cherished the ideal of the liberation of the working class from capitalist exploitation. Their behaviour in the fateful days of 1918 was predetermined by what they believed to be the correct interpretation of Marxism. It is unfair and unreasonable to accuse them of having betrayed the proletarian revolution because, for years, they had maintained that the revolutionary theory and practice advocated by the pioneers of Communism were contrary to the teachings of Karl Marx.

The conflict between Socialism and Communism resulted from the contradictions in the gospel of their common prophet. Gradualism is inherent in the doctrine of inevitability; it rules out the communist conception of revolution. If history is a determined process, rationally it makes no room for revolutions. The bourgeois social order would break down under the pressure of the contradictions of capitalist economy, and be inevitably followed by Socialism. Where is then the necessity for a revolution? Guided by the rationalist tradition of modern European culture, the German Social Democratic theoreticians, some of whom had learned directly from the

Master, came to the conclusion that by preaching violent revolution he had contradicted his historicism. But the Social Democrats also contradicted themselves. Having supported the mass violence of the War, they opposed the violence of revolution and connived at its violent suppression.

Marx and his more fanatical followers had in mind the picture of the French Revolution, when they imagined that the bourgeois state would be overthrown by an armed insurrection of the proletariat. They did not reckon with their host. The military power of the modern state is incomparably greater than the mercenary armies of the decrepit monarchies which were brought down by popular uprisings in the eighteenth century. In Russia, a determined minority could seize power thanks to the disintegration of the army. The Tzarist State was a medieval monarchy, corrupt, inefficient, weakened by factional feuds in the Court. Therefore, the Russian Revolution was cast very largely on the pattern of the French Revolution. The conditions in Germany were entirely different. The army had survived the defeat and disappearance of the monarchy. It proved to be the decisive factor in the critical period of 1918-19. It was a professional army, officered by politically minded members of a traditional military caste. The anti-militarist appeal of the Communists found a response from the conscripted soldiers; but the officers' corps was impervious to it.

The news of the establishment of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council in Berlin, which for days controlled the great city, flashed over Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The example was imitated in numerous cities and towns. The insurrection was on the model of the Bolshevik uprising a year ago. Public buildings, railway stations, communication centres, newspaper offices were seized by the insurgents, who proclaimed the advent of a Socialist Republic. It was a mighty challenge to the Social Democratic leaders, who were trying to fill up the political vacuum with caretaker governments in Berlin and in provincial capitals pending the election of a Constituent Assembly to proclaim the establishment of a democratic Republic. In order to placate the insurgents, the head of the Social Democratic Government, Fritz Ebert

offered Liebknecht a seat on the Cabinet. The latter did not accept the offer. Thereupon, in panic, Ebert took a step which sealed the fate of the revolution of the communist conception.

From a safe distance, the General Staff of the defeated army was watching the ominous events in Berlin and other places throughout the country. Ebert telephoned to General Groener, who had replaced Ludendorff asking for the co-operation of the army in restoring order. The alternative story is that Groener took the initiative and volunteered the co-operation; Ebert welcomed it as the drowning man seizing at a straw. In any case, the army stepped into the political field with the belief that the danger of revolution offered a chance for the resurrection of Germany as a military power. The hope was that, confronted with the common danger, even the *Entente* Powers would desist from a complete demilitarisation of Germany. So, from the very beginning, the German revolution ran up against the potential alliance of the victorious and the vanquished capitalist Powers. It had little chance to succeed as in Russia.

The defeated German army was scattered all over the larger part of Europe. It was a tremendous task to demobilise millions of men and transport them back home in an orderly manner. The interim Social Democratic government simply could not tackle it. Even a skeleton of the machinery needed for the purpose was not there. The Government sought the co-operation of the General Staff, which readily undertook the responsibility. It was a chance for restoring discipline amongst the soldiers and reasserting the authority of the officers. On an order secretly issued by the General Staff, the so-called *Freikorps* (battalions composed exclusively of demobilised officers) sprang up throughout the country for maintaining internal order, in other words, to suppress the revolutionary movement. A detachment of the *Freikorps*, several thousand strong, marched through the streets of Berlin, fired on workers' demonstrations and arrested some members of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. Leaflets instigating assassination of Liebknecht and demanding bloody suppression of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council were showered on the city. Huge posters on the walls bore the following text: "Workers, Citizens!

Our Fatherland is close to ruin; save it! It is menaced not from outside, but from within, by the Spartakists. Kill its leaders; Kill Liebknecht; Kill the Jews. Then you will have peace, work and bread". The blood-curdling exhortation was signed by "Soldiers Returning from the Front".

Fury was let loose. There was confusion all around. The rising tide of terror demoralised the amorphous mass movement. The First National Conference of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils refused to admit Luxemburg and Liebknecht. The tide had indeed turned. Although, taking advantage of the general confusion and demoralisation, the Social Democratic leaders had captured the conference, there was a strong opposition to the government's alliance with the imperial army. Ebert argued that the alliance was indispensable for the protection of the frontiers of the nascent Republic. Hindenburg backed him up by issuing a proclamation from his headquarters: "The army supports the Ebert Government and expects the Government to carry out its promise to preserve the army".

Immediately after the conference, Ebert ordered the Commander of a garrison on the outskirts of Berlin to march into the city and disperse the armed workers' battalions which guarded the premises of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council and other public buildings occupied by the revolutionaries. The Imperial troops opened artillery fire on buildings in which revolutionaries had barricaded themselves. Berlin had its blood bath.

While the army began the attack on the revolution, its leadership failed to rise up to the occasion. Liebknecht was a man of the masses; he was superb on the platform. But the powerful emotional appeal of his oratory, which was backed up by individual acts of physical as well as moral courage, lacked the substance of a carefully thought out theory and practical ideas. Luxemburg was the brain of the Spartakus League.

A Pole by birth, while still a student, she had to flee her native land to escape arrest for secret revolutionary activities. Before long, the young woman attained a position of prominence in the German Social Democratic Party, and came to be recognized as the intellectual leader of the leftwing of the

Second International, while the red-bearded Russian Bolshevik was treated as a dangerous fanatic. Theoretically a pupil of Kautsky, as regards revolutionary practice, Luxemburg took up a position midway between the peaceful gradualism advocated by the classical Marxists, and the conspiratorial method of the Russian Bolsheviks that eventually came to be known as Leninist Communism. It was an equivocal position.

As against the Social Democratic perspective of a gradual transformation of the State, Luxemburg advocated political mass strikes as the instrument for overthrowing the capitalist order. The fallacy of the theory became evident during the critical days of the German revolution. If political mass strikes were to be the final offensive of the revolutionary army, it must have a general staff to plan and direct the onslaught, previously trained for the purpose. Notwithstanding her undoubted cleverness, Luxemburg did not think out her idea of revolutionary practice to the logical conclusion. If she did, she would realise that, without Lenin's party of professional revolutionaries, political mass strikes were bound to fail. To attain the object of overthrowing the capitalist state, political mass strikes must lead up to armed insurrection, and there must be a sternly disciplined party to plan and direct the whole process of revolutionary development, and ultimately to capture power in behalf of the proletariat. That was the essence of Bolshevism, worked out by Lenin in the minutest detail, during the ten years of exile in Switzerland.

It was a rejection of the rationalist, humanist and democratic tradition of Marxism, indeed of the proletarian striving for social emancipation. But it was Leninism which succeeded in Russia. In Germany, the leaders of the revolution attempted a compromise between orthodox Marxism, loyal to the tradition of Western culture, and Russian Bolshevism, which subsequently came to be known as Communism. Luxemburg was a theoretician; in practical politics, she allowed herself to be swayed by emotional considerations. As a matter of fact, her political activity for years previously having been only to criticise the right-wing leaders, the pioneers of Communism in Germany were found wanting when they were required to lead a revolutionary mass movement to success.

Luxemburg would not support the Social Democratic Government nor would she approve of any attempt to seize power. She advocated a continuous series of political mass strikes, which would sharpen the class struggle. The naivete of this revolutionary tactics was evident; it expected a power vacuum to continue indefinitely until the majority of the working class would actively participate in the revolutionary movement, and raise the Communists to power without any violence. It assumed that in the meantime forces opposed to the revolution would remain inactive. They did not, and claimed Luxemburg together with Liebknecht as the first victims of their violence.

The great merit of Luxemburg's position was rejection of dictatorship, even when, on the authority of the successful Communist leader, Lenin, it had become the cardinal article of the revolutionary faith. She clearly preferred democracy; but it must be a revolutionary democracy as against formal parliamentarism. She failed to think out the form; yet, she would not travel the only democratic way open to her and her followers at that time. Luxemburg was an all-round non-co-operator. She even opposed communist participation in the Constituent Assembly. The result of the policy of uncompromising negativism isolated the Communists from the mass movement. Mass enthusiasm could not be kept up indefinitely. The Socialist Republic proclaimed by Liebknecht on the day the revolution broke out remained a utopia. Meanwhile, militarist terror demoralised the movement which had no immediate objective. The cry for the restoration of order found response in the middle class masses. The working class was isolated.

In that hopeless situation, the democratic Republic promised by the Social Democrats held out the only chance of preventing a restoration of the old order. A vast majority of the working class veered around under that Social Democratic leadership. Encouraged by the isolation of the Communists, Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske, the last having joined the interim government in charge of its relation with the Imperial army, proclaimed that violence would be met with violence. That was the signal for an all-out attack on the Communists. Meanwhile,

a sizeable army had quietly moved up to the neighbourhood of Berlin. On January 9th, only two months after the revolution had broken out, the army marched in and occupied the city, practically without any resistance.

Like the last flare-up before the flame goes out, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council proclaimed the establishment of an alternative revolutionary government headed by Liebknecht. The Communist leaders disowned their responsibility for the adventurist decision of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council by forbidding Liebknecht to participate in the desperate gesture. Their last connection with the organised mass movement was broken.

A few days later, Luxemburg and Liebknecht were seized by a band of young officers and taken to the military headquarters. They were brutally treated and literally slaughtered. Their mutilated bodies, almost beyond recognition, were found floating in a canal the next day. The verdict of the Military Tribunal set up to investigate the crime was that the prisoners were shot while they tried to escape. The assassination was symbolic; it was the assassination of the revolution, which lasted for two months and was followed by a year of terror, civil war and counter-revolution.

Civil War and National Bolshevism

THE year 1919 was the darkest period in the history of revolution. The defeat in Germany was a severe blow to the great expectations which had sustained the courage of the Russian Bolsheviks when the German Baltic Army reached the outskirts of Petrograd and even Moscow was in danger. But there was no going back. The boats were burnt. Having captured power, the Bolsheviks resolved to defend it to the last ditch, with the forlorn hope that the German revolution would recover from the defeat. The hope was sustained by the tenacious faith in the infallibility of the Marxist gospel. Meanwhile, they had to fall back on their own wits and resources.

In Russia, the civil war had begun. The more reactionary section of higher military officers had recruited mercenary armies which were converging on Moscow from different directions. The German army was still in occupation of the western and southern provinces. From Mongolia, the Japanese had invaded Siberia. The British army in Persia had occupied the petroleum town of Baku and set up a Menshevik Government in Georgia. Another foreign interventionary force had landed in Murmansk on the Arctic Sea. In the summer of 1919, the railway line between Petrograd and Moscow had been cut off, and the army of the Cossack General Denikin had reached a point only sixty miles to the south of Moscow. The Soviet capital was veritably a beleaguered city, although points of resistance held out in more distant parts. The siege of Tzaritzina (now Stalingrad), for example, was an epic event of the civil war. A small garrison, commanded by Stalin, held out for nine months against almost overwhelming

odds. Guerilla war was waged behind the enemy lines all over the country. In February 1919, it was decided to transform the improvised "Red Guards" battalions of armed workers into the Red Army for the defence of the revolution.

In Germany also, civil war raged in all its fury. But counter-revolutionary terror could not extinguish the smouldering fire of mass revolt. In hundreds of places, big and small, throughout the country, Workers' and Soldiers' Councils had taken over the local administration. To suppress them all, the army had to march the whole length and breadth of the land. Working class quarters in industrial towns were pillaged. Countless local revolutionary leaders were either shot in the streets or executed after summary trials in military courts.

But there were some silver linings in the dark clouds which hung heavily on the European horizon. Early in April, a Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Bavaria as the focal point of resistance to the triumphant counter-revolution in Germany. But it did not last even for a month. About the same time, a socialist-communist coalition seized power in Hungary and established a Soviet Republic. It held out longer — for four months, until a Rumanian army, on order from the *Entente* Powers, marched in.

The old order of Central Europe, however, could not be restored. The economic impact of the war had undermined it. Military defeat demoralised it. The crazy quilt of the Austro-Hungarian Empire fell to pieces. It was dismembered by the Versailles Treaty. In Germany also, about a dozen subsidiary monarchies followed the Hohenzollern Empire into oblivion. The fanaticism of the professional military caste could establish a reign of terror, but it could not set the clock of history back. The disintegration and spiritual demoralisation of the decayed social order could not be arrested by violence.

The Versailles Treaty aggravated the crisis of the old social order. The older generation of politicians, bureaucratic officials and military men of the higher ranks preferred to mark time. Meanwhile, they intrigued against the new regime. The Social Democratic government was afraid of signing the treaty. The army was vociferously against the humiliating clauses calling for demilitarisation of Germany. By signing

the treaty, the Government might forfeit the support of the army without which it could not last for a day. Ebert appealed to Hindenburg for advice. The old fox replied that the army was absolutely incapable of continuing the war, but he would prefer the honour of a soldier's death to an ignominious peace. The meaning of the bravado was: Let the Social Democrats bear the odium of signing a humiliating treaty; the proud soldiers wanted to keep their hand free, their record clean, so that eventually they might rally the nation for a patriotic war. At the same time, they expected that, notwithstanding the terms of the Versailles Treaty, the *Entente* Powers would connive at a rebirth of the German army for the creation of a buffer against revolutionary Russia. As a matter of fact, the small armed force allowed by the Versailles Treaty enabled the leaders of the defeated German army to maintain the officers' corps intact.

The young officers were impatient with the temporising manoeuvres of their superiors. Demilitarisation confronted them with the dire perspective of unemployment. They opposed the Versailles Treaty and advocated a war of liberation to be waged by the nation in arms. Their attitude towards the Versailles Treaty was very much similar to that of the left-wing Russian Bolsheviks towards the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. They proposed guerilla campaigns against the *Entente* army of occupation, terrorist plots for demonstrative assassination of the internal and foreign enemies of the nation, and overthrow of the republican government which had signed the humiliating treaty. The ultra-nationalist German youth conceived the bold idea of an alliance with Russia in the war against the *Entente* Powers for the liberation of Germany and vindication of her honour. Overthrow of the Social Democratic Government and subversion of the bourgeois democratic republic being also the objectives of the German Communists, the alliance could begin at home, to be international in the course of time. Young army officers sought the alliance of the revolutionary proletariat to put up a resistance against the enslavement of Germany, under the flag of National-Bolshevism.

The curious cult gained numerous adherents in the ranks of the Spartakus League. The revolution was reeling under

the attack of the army. It could survive if there was a defection in the enemy camp, and the more active elements came over to join it. Nothing could be more propitious. Had not Marx predicted that in the final crisis decomposition of the bourgeois society would guarantee the success of the revolution?

Radek was then a State prisoner in Berlin. He was enthused by the new development. He had advocated a similar method of resistance to the German invasion of Russia after the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Now it could be applied in Germany against *Entente* Imperialism. Surely this time Lenin would not oppose, as he had done on the previous occasion. In Russia, the Bolsheviks were in a precarious position. If the *Entente* Powers were engaged by a mass resistance in Germany, they would not be in a position to rush reinforcements to the White Russian armies marching on Petrograd and Moscow. A Russo-German alliance in a revolutionary war could possibly liberate the whole of Europe. Radek was the representative of the Russian Bolsheviks and the Soviet Government. His attitude was a great encouragement for National-Bolshevism.

Luxemburg and Liebknecht dead, and its veteran outstanding leaders in jail, the Spartakus League was finding it very difficult to recover from the defeat. The possibility of an alliance with the militant nationalist youth opened up a new perspective. In the then prevailing atmosphere of confusion and disorganisation, the advocates of National-Bolshevism gained a considerable influence in the Spartakus League. German Communism was drifting in a dangerous direction, just when the army was preparing a powerful attack to overthrow the infant republic. The peaceful mass resistance to that attack and its ignominious failure were the most dramatic events in the early history of the German revolution. Most of the officers who sought alliance with the Communists were also against the Social Democratic regime, they were indifferent to its fate, and many of them actually sympathised with the insurrection. In any case, for one reason or another, the Communists were practically out of the picture in those crucial days.

Already in the beginning of 1919, when the Social Democratic Government granted them the freedom of the City of

Berlin, the *Freikorps* had suggested establishment of a dictatorship under Ebert. But the General Staff wanted to move with circumspection, and reined in the impetuous young officers. The conclusion of the Versailles Treaty dashed the forlorn hope of the German militarists that the *Entente* Powers would allow Germany to retain a sufficiently large army to combat the danger of revolution. The original provision for an army of 4,00,000 had raised the hope. It could be a highly specialised professional army employing the entire officers' corps of the old army. But the number was reduced to 2,00,000, to be further cut down to half the size by the middle of 1920. Such a small army could accommodate not more than 25 per cent of the officers of the old army. More than 20,000 professional soldiers, who had occupied a privileged position under the old order, would be unemployed and lose their social status. Naturally, there was a great ferment in the army. The Republican Government had undertaken the responsibility of enforcing the terms of the Versailles Treaty under the supervision of the Allied Control Commission. It must be overthrown if Germany was to repudiate the dictated peace.

The army on the western front was demobilised. But many divisions were in far-off Russia, beyond the jurisdiction of the Allied Control Commission. The commanders of the Eastern Army refused to obey the orders of the Republican Government to demobilise and surrender arms. With the secret approval of the General Staff, they resolved to march on Berlin, overthrow the Republican Government and set up a military dictatorship. The younger officers, who had toyed with the idea of waging a revolutionary war in alliance with the Communists and Bolshevik Russia to vindicate the honour of Germany, were attracted by the plan. They operated in Berlin as the vanguard of the undefeated Eastern Army, which was moving towards the capital ostensibly to surrender arms and demobilise. It could not stay on in the Baltic provinces of Russia and Poland, which had become independent States according to the Versailles Treaty and under the protection of the *Entente* Powers. Nor could it operate indefinitely in the far-off Ukraine and Southern Russia, cut off from the base of supply in Germany. The Commanders of the

Eastern Army, therefore, decided to gamble; it was a gamble, because the *Entente* Army would march into Germany, if necessary, to enforce the Versailles Treaty.

Towards the end of 1919, a pamphlet entitled "Reflections on Dictatorship" was distributed in Berlin. It demanded the resignation of the Social Democratic Government, dissolution of the *Reischstag* (Parliament), election of a new National Assembly under the supervision of the army; meanwhile, demilitarisation according to the Versailles Treaty must stop. Shortly thereafter, a typical Prussian army, wearing steel helmets with the emblem of the *Swastika*, flying the old Imperial flag, marched into Berlin. It surrounded all the government buildings and proclaimed the establishment of a new government headed by General Luettwitz of the Eastern Command and one Dr. Kapp, a high official of the old regime.

President Ebert appealed to the Berlin representatives of the General Staff. They flatly refused to help; one section of the army would never fight another. They advised Ebert to come to terms with the insurgents. The latter were prepared to have the Social Democrat Noske as the figurehead of their dictatorship. Realising that the situation in Berlin was hopeless, the Social Democratic Government fled to Dresden, but there also it found itself in the danger of being arrested by the local garrison. The fugitive government finally took shelter in Stuttgart, far away to the south of the storm-centre of Berlin. A year of terror and civil war ended in a temporary triumph of counter-revolution. That was the State of Germany when I reached there.

Bloodless Battle of Berlin

IN December 1919, the political and psychological atmosphere of the German capital was surcharged with an indescribable tenseness. There was a feeling of uncertainty as well as of nervousness in the air. Yet, public life appeared to run its normal course, as normal as anything could be under the circumstances. The old order collapsed like a house of cards; everybody seemed to have lost faith in it. But nothing new was filling up the vacuum. A majority of the people neither lamented the past nor had any illusion about a better future. They needed all their wits to face the present with courage, the present of privation, hunger, uncertainty and anguish. People moved in the streets like ghosts.

During the last years of the war, consumers' goods, particularly food and clothing, had been in short supply. The war was over, but scarcity continued. A majority of the people were under-nourished, shabbily clothed, sullen. A whole generation of children had grown up without even the sight of milk. There was no sugar, no coffee, no butter. Rationed bread, a couple of slices per head per day, was made of anything but wheat. The scarcity had given rise to strange customs: Guests to a party took along their meagre ration of what was called bread and tiny tablets of saccharine. The hostess served coffee which was a brownish brew of some roasted grain. I remembered the plenty in Spain and even next-door Switzerland. The contrast was staggering. War certainly had done the majority of the German people no good. They had more than enough reason to be embittered by the experience.

Before long, I discovered that the same city was divided into two worlds — one of poverty, shabbiness and gloom,

the other full of riotous life, extravagant, gay and gaudy. Kurfuerstendamm, the main thoroughfare of the fashionable part of the city, was lined with shops full of all kinds of luxury goods, and most elegantly furnished spacious cafes, ornate cabarets and dance halls, which did not open till after midnight. In the afternoons, the traffic was jammed with latest model cars, and the cafes were crowded with prosperous burghers, dandified young men and swaggering officers, accompanied by the corresponding types of women. Men in smart uniforms displaying their decorations, some wearing the famous Iron Cross, which all soldiers coveted under the old regime, dominated the scene, as if Germany had not lost the war. No wonder that a country so divided was the scene of a fierce civil war.

In the prevailing atmosphere of confusion, panic and suspicion, it was difficult for a foreigner to find his moorings. I was to contact Borodin through one Dr. Eduard Fuchs. He was the author of a monumental work on the history of social customs. A detailed erudite description of the various aspects of social and domestic life since the dawn of civilisation, Dr. Fuchs's book candidly dealt also with the problems of erotics. No library, private or public, was complete without the book, but no lady should read it; yet the wicked book was clandestinely read by the adolescent daughters of every respectable household.

Though a distinguished academician, Dr. Fuchs was a friend of Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and other intellectual pioneers of German Communism, himself actually a member of the Spartakus League. All the Communist leaders whom I knew by name — Wilhelm Pieck, Ernst Meyer, August Thalheimer, Klara Zetkin, Paul Levi — were either in prison or underground. In any case, it would be dangerous for me to make any enquiries about them. Borodin knew that I was to put up at the Fuerstenhof Hotel, but he did not know the date of my arrival. I could do nothing but wait patiently until he contacted me.

Meanwhile, I made some discreet attempts to contact Dr. Fuchs, who also seemed to have made himself scarce. No information about his whereabouts was available from the most obvious places — his Berlin home, the University and

the public library. While waiting impatiently for someone to turn up, I had to do some financial transaction. For the purpose, I called at a private Bank recommended by Borodin. The banker was a Social Democrat who sympathised with Communism. Presently, I became quite friendly with him, and at his home met Bernstein, Kautsky, Hilfferding and other veterans who were not very happy about the shape of things under the government of their party.

A new convert to Communism, I was full of prejudices against those men. At the same time, their reputation as great Marxist theoreticians called for respect; and I was struck by their humanness. There was neither malice nor rancour in their criticism of Communism. While they were rather contemptuous of what they called Liebknecht's "melodrama," Luxemburg commanded their admiration. They all believed that she would never embrace Bolshevism, which they characterised as a new type of oriental despotism. As a matter of fact, the differentiation between Socialism and Communism was not yet sharp amongst the pioneers of the German revolution. An intellectual brotherhood, they cherished a common ideal — social liberation of the working class. Learned men of high culture and refined taste they kept their personal relations and social intercourse on the intellectual and humanist plane, untarnished by party politics. A good-humoured mutual tolerance held them together even when conflicting loyalties were pulling them apart.

Bernstein was very old, almost blind. Yet, every evening he joined the select gathering in the drawing-room of Herr Simon, the banker. The old man was perpetually in a combative mood, and Lenin was his *bête noire*. He did not believe that the Bolsheviki would hold out for long in Russia, and called Lenin a reckless adventurer who would disrupt the international socialist movement with his fanatical ideas, and was now gambling with the fate of his country. The refrain of the tirade, which was rather sorrowful than malicious, was: "Calling me a revisionist! The conceited fool. He is making a caricature of Marxism; he is the arch-revisionist."

When I was introduced to Bernstein, he taunted me: "So, you are a convert to the Tartar's fanaticism?" None kept any

secret in Simon's drawing-room. He was the common confidant of the leaders of the three groups in which the German Social Democratic Party was breaking up. He speculated in the stock market in behalf of the three parties, as Bernstein once remarked caustically. He transacted business for all of them, though more for the Communists.

The Social Democratic Party was financed by the powerful trade-union federation which ran a far-flung chain of co-operative banks. The Independent Social Democratic Party, which split away from the mother organisation towards the end of the war, controlled a share of the vested interests. Conspiratorial existence of the Communists required them to have a legal channel for financial transactions. The legendary Bolshevik gold did not come directly from Russia. It came through devious routes, mainly from Scandinavia and Holland, where the precious proceeds of the expropriation of the expropriators in Russia were converted into cash. The money came to Berlin where it had again to be changed into the currencies of other countries where it was to go clandestinely. The value of the German mark was falling. The central fund of the Communist International had to be maintained in stable currencies — dollar and pound. All those transactions could be done legally only through a bank.

Eventually, I met Dr. Fuchs and contacted Borodin, who introduced me to the exclusively communist salon of the film star Erna Morena. There I met Karl Radek who had just been released from prison with the order to leave Germany within one week. He was bubbling with enthusiasm about the great possibilities of an alliance with the demobilised army officers. A small wiry man, full of vivacity, he could not sit still. Whenever he wanted to say something, he walked up and down the large room and spoke as if he was on the platform addressing an audience; and he always wanted to say something. Indeed, he occupied the centre of the stage, so to say, and outshone the film star who evidently adored him as the revolution personified. I noticed that her worshipful attitude was shared also by the men present. The Russian Bolshevik, although Radek was only a Galician Jew, was the oracle.

I was sceptical about National-Bolshevism, which appeared to me to be a fantastic idea. It was a lesson of my own experience that nationalist revolution was an equivocal ideal. Radek seemed to sense a discord in my silence. By way of driving his point home with an illustration, he walked up to me, placed his hand on my shoulder, which happened to be higher than his head, and said: "The Indian comrade is a personification of National-Bolshevism, which will not only conquer Germany, but win the whole of the East for Communism." At that time, I did not realise how prophetic his opinion was. I disowned the dubious distinction, and said that at least in my case the nationalist had to fade out before Communism could be an honest conviction. There was a murmur of approval, which was brushed aside by the Russian Bolshevik's condescension for the erring opinion of an oriental comrade. I resented the condescension, but kept quiet for the moment.

Before long, the bubble of National-Bolshevism burst, throwing the Spartakus League in a crisis which it survived by the skin of its teeth. My scepticism about the fantastic cult most probably was helpful to some extent. In any case, I could influence Ernst Meyer, who had succeeded Luxemburg as the intellectual leader of early German Communism. Radek returned to Moscow, to be welcomed as the hero who had in his pocket the plan of conquering Germany. Lenin turned down the plan and condemned National-Bolshevism as arrant nonsense. His caustic criticism of the futility of the ultra-nationalist opposition to the Versailles Treaty was elaborated in the famous brochure "Left-Wing Communism — An Infantile Disease."

Early in March 1920, a section of the old German army made an almost successful attempt to overthrow the newly established Weimar Republic. One fine morning, it marched into the capital and without any resistance occupied all the strategic positions. The Social Democratic President, Ebert, with his Cabinet left Berlin in panic to avoid arrest. That was one of the most dramatic moments of the history of post-war Europe. From the window of my hotel — in the heart of Berlin (the Potsdamer Platz), I watched a typical Prussian army fanning out in different directions. People of

all classes stood by listlessly, as if paralysed by a sudden blow. The huge city was plunged into confusion.

But overnight, there appeared a bold leadership to take the situation in hand, and deal a counterblow. In the midst of that dramatic situation, I met Wilhelm Pieck for the first time. At first, I took him for a military officer in civilian clothes — a middle-sized man with a stiff bearing, accentuated by brown bristles standing over the forehead. It was a secret meeting of the Communist Party. I went there with Ernst Meyer, a quiet, soft-spoken scholarly intellectual, who had replaced Pieck as the leader of the party. The meeting had to decide a rather ticklish question, and the decision had to be quick, before dawn. Something utterly unexpected had happened. The call to resist the counter-revolution had been issued by Carl Legien, President of the powerful German Federation of Labour, whom the Communists together with the entire left wing of the Social Democratic Party had for years denounced as a rank reactionary. He had decided to call a political general strike to be declared from the dawn. What should the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat do? Should it play second or third fiddle to reformist Legien, or simply fade out of the picture in that crucial moment? Meyer advocated the former course. Pieck hesitated, and then proposed consultation with the leaders of the Independent Socialist Party (the left-wing of the Social Democratic Party had broken away to form a new party under that name). A joint committee issued the call for the strike before dawn. Pieck and Meyer signed it in behalf of the Communist Party.

For four days, the big city was dead, shops closed, factories idle, streets deserted in the day, everything enveloped in complete darkness in the night. On the fifth morning, from the same hotel window, I watched the mass of steel-helmeted soldiers marching in the opposite direction, in sullen silence. The might of organised labour had triumphed over brute force. For days, there was not a soul in the streets; the insurgent army did not have the chance of firing a single shot. It was great luck to have had that experience. Naturally, it made an indelible impression on my mind. The acquaintance of Meyer and Pieck was a part of the picture. One has since then been

devoured by the blood-thirsty mother revolution, perhaps because he was as devoted as well as an intelligent child; and the other rewarded, not so much for devotion to the goddess as for obsequiousness to her high priests, which betrayed want of intellectual independence.

Having inflicted the crushing defeat on the monarchist militarist reaction, the reformist Legien made yet another bold move which, if supported by the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat and other leftist politicians, might have consolidated the Republic and consequently altered the subsequent history of Germany and also of Europe. He demanded reconstruction of the Cabinet to the exclusion of the notorious Noske and some others who, in the critical days, had behaved most unreliably. Following the Independent Socialists, the Communists broke the united front and refused to support Legien's demand. Pieck was their spokesman in that fateful negotiation. Had not Meyer come out of prison in the nick of time, Pieck might have led the party into a shameful position. The refusal to support Legien's demand for a reconstruction of the Cabinet went a long way in that direction.

The fatal drift was stopped by Lenin's intervention, who severely condemned the practice of painting nationalism red. Fortunately, by that time, the old guard of the Spartakus League had come out of prison. Pieck was replaced by Meyer and Thalheimer at the head of the German Communist Party, and the National-Bolsheviks were expelled from its ranks.

The Old Guard of German Communism

THE defeat of the Kapp-Luettwitz insurrection was a turning point in the civil war in Germany. Legien's attempt to reconstruct the government under direct control of the trade-unions did not succeed. But in the industrial districts of the country, there was a resurgence of the revolutionary movement. In the Rhineland, particularly in the Ruhr Valley, and in Saxony, it developed into armed uprisings, which lasted for months. To defeat the "Red Army of the Ruhr," General von Seeckt of the Imperial Army was authorised by the Social Democratic Ebert-Mueller Government to organise the *Reichswehr*, which, composed of professional soldiers, came to be the nucleus of a resurrected German army, to overrun Europe once again after twenty years.

The proletarian insurrection in the Ruhr, however, was a spontaneous movement. It had no political direction. Indeed, all the three working class parties were opposed to the *putsch* (adventure). They issued a joint declaration calling upon the workers to lay down arms so as to avoid a clash with the *Reichswehr*. In behalf of the Communist Party, Wilhelm Pieck signed the declaration. The Ruhr insurrection had little chance of success. The victorious army of the *Entente* Powers was on the alert. As a matter of fact, General von Seeckt organised the *Reichswehr* more with the connivance of the victorious enemy than with the legal sanction of the Weimar Constitution.

The movement in central Germany was pregnant with greater possibilities. It brought into prominence Heinrich Brandler, who before long became the leader of the Communist Party and held the position until after the defeat of the Second German Revolution in 1923. Brandler was not an upstart. A

building worker by profession, he had risen to the top of the trade as a highly skilled workman. In his youth, he had travelled extensively through Europe, earning his living as an apprentice according to the mediaeval tradition. He had met Lenin in Switzerland and lived there with the Bolshevik emigrés. An active member of the Social Democratic Party ever since the early years of the century, he had finally settled down in Chemnitz, and built up a powerful industrial and political organisation of the local workers, which sided with the Communists when the revolution broke out. As soon as the news of the Berlin military officers' insurrection reached Chemnitz, the local workers, under Brandler's direction, practically seized the town and made preparations for its defence. The City Hall was captured and a Workers' Council (*Soviet*) was set up there as the *de facto* government of the town. All who might join the counter-revolution were arrested and the local garrison was disarmed. Brandler's plan was to march on the great industrial city of Leipzig, join forces there with the insurgent workers from other towns of Saxony, and make a dash to besiege Berlin, which was believed to have been occupied by the Baltic Army.

While Brandler was pursuing this strategic plan, a more colourful person appeared on the scene. It was Max Hoelz, who recruited a fairly numerous guerilla band from the poor peasantry of the Saxon Uplands. Meanwhile, the counter-revolution had been defeated in Berlin. Brandler would avail of the respite to build up a strong communist base in the industrial towns. He disapproved of the provocative activities of Hoelz and expelled him from the Communist Party. But the name of the Saxon guerilla leader acquired a romantic reputation throughout the country and the headquarters of the Communist Party decided to send a representative to contact Brandler personally and make a first-hand report of the situation in Central Germany.

The legendary figure of Max Hoelz and the colourful accounts of his guerilla activities appealed to my imagination. I was anxious to meet him and observe his operations from close quarters. The dry humour of August Thalheimer, who had replaced Pieck as the leader of the Communist Party,

benevolently smiled on my romantic predisposition, and arranged for my journey. But I did not meet Max Hoelz until 1928, when he came to Moscow, having served seven years' imprisonment after his arrest in 1921. Instead, I met Brandler in Chemnitz.

I had travelled from Berlin together with one Guralsky, who had recently come from Moscow as a representative of the Communist International. Borodin introduced him to me as such. But he preferred to pass as a German under the assumed name of Klein. He was a poor substitute for Borodin, in personal appearance as well as intellectually: a typical East-European Jew, inclined to foppishness in dress, pompous in behaviour, secretive as regards his mission. Nevertheless, he did acquire a position of some importance not only in Germany, but also in France, as the personal agent of Piatnitsky who, during the early twenties, controlled the underground machinery of the Communist International and doled out money to the national sections.

Brandler and Guralsky spoke in German, which I could not follow. The former hardly took any notice of me, but I was struck by his appearance and the deep guttural voice which sounded like the growl of an angry bull-dog. He resembled one — a massive head with a broad strong face on a rather short but powerful torso which carried a pronounced hunch on the back. As a builder's assistant, still in his early youth, Brandler had slipped from a high scaffolding and suffered an injury to the spine. Psychologists say that consciousness of physical deformity creates complexes. Though painfully ignored while we met for the first time, subsequently I came to be intimately associated with Brandler. There was nothing abnormal in him except an excessive shyness, which he tried to hide behind a gruff voice and apparently rough manners. Shyness on the part of a man of the masses was perhaps the expression of a psychological complex.

It was a curious coincidence that there was another hunch-back amongst the most outstanding communist leaders. It was Antonio Gramsci of Italy. I met him in Moscow. He was not a worker, but an intellectual, a professor of philosophy. He also was terribly shy — more so than Brandler. In private

company, he seldom spoke. Arrested in the earlier years of the fascist regime, he spent twenty-two years in prison, and died soon after his release, on the liberation of Italy. The hardship of long imprisonment had shattered his delicate health, but could not daunt his spirit. Pondering over the fact of Croce's popularity with the progressive younger generation even after he had turned a critic of Marxism, Gramsci came to the conclusion that the philosophical aspect of Marxism should be revised so that it could offer the idealistically inclined all that Croce gave and much more. Gramsci had left behind about 2,000 pages of manuscript as the result of a profound study in prison. It may turn out to be the greatest contribution to philosophical thought hitherto made by any Communist.

Brandler is not an intellectual. He is the type of working man idealised in Marxist literature — self-educated to a high degree, proud of belonging to a class destined to build a new social order, full of confidence in himself as also in the proletariat. Others who shared with him the leadership of the Communist Party in the early twenties — Ernst Meyer, August Thalheimer, Paul Levi, Paul Froelich — were intellectuals, well versed in arts and letters, law, philosophy, economics. They were impressed by Brandler's sound commonsense with which he approached all theoretical as well as practical problems.

I watched him with mixed feelings while he talked to Guralsky. The latter evidently was trying to assume an air of authority. Brandler treated him with scant respect; growling curt replies to questions which he treated as of no importance. At last he took some notice of me; a typically European *prolet*, he had never thought of the possibility of Communism finding adherents in colonial countries. I resented his attitude, and went away from the first meeting with an antipathy which lingered even after I came to know him well enough, and that was not until 1922, when he came to Moscow. The next year, I was quite closely associated with him in the preparation of the Second German Revolution. Even then, we could not be personally friendly. Something intangible stood between us. It was his shyness and my original antipathy as I realized later. My subjective reserve broke down when in the Fourth World

Congress of the Communist International the Russians unfairly saddled him with the entire responsibility for the defeat of the German Revolution in 1923, and he was removed from the leadership of the party. Thereafter, he was detained in Moscow for two years. But naturally embittered by the experience, he lived like a recluse. We met again in Berlin in 1929, and at last discovered each other, so to say. He proved to be the most loyal and warm-hearted friend.

My relation with August Thalheimer, from the very beginning, was of personal friendship. He was more of a scholar than a revolutionary, although his dedication to the cause of the social liberation of the working class was by no means amateurish. But for the dedication, he would have risen high in the academic profession. When in the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International, together with Brandler, he was held responsible for the failure of the Second German Revolution, the flippant Radek ridiculed him as the typical German professor who lived in a dreamland. The criticism was malicious, but the description not wide off the mark. Often Thalheimer was absent from the sessions of the Politbureau of the party. But we knew where to find him. He would be sitting in a small cafe with a glass of beer, which was never emptied, absorbed in some problem of higher mathematics. But the call of duty brought him out of the dreamland of abstraction, and his mind turned to the problems of the theory and practice of revolution with equal keenness. In addition to mathematics, philology was also a subject of his studies, and he was recognised in the academic circles as an authority on Panini. Barring Bukharin, he was the topmost theoretician of the international communist movement, and retained the reputation even after his expulsion from the party.

Thalheimer was the first German Communist leader I met soon after my arrival in Berlin. It was at Eduard Fuchs's home, the rendezvous of communist highlights who did not frequent Erna Morena's fashionable Salon. The Fuchs home in a pine-wooded suburb of Berlin was like a miniature art gallery and a cultural museum. He was the proud possessor of the largest collection of original Daumiers. His large private library specialised in the history of art and culture. Every

room was furnished in a particular style, the *ensemble* being of refined taste and sober luxury. Fuchs attached great importance to his well-stocked wine cellar. On the whole, it was the home of a Sybarite; there was something Greek about it. Introducing me to Thalheimer, who stood up from a deep arm chair contemplating the glowing bowl of his pipe, Fuchs remarked that, having heard about me from Borodin, he thought I should meet the August before others. After a while, Ernst Meyer joined us. All the three spoke English. The conversation was of a general nature. Bits of news about the non-co-operation movement in India were appearing in the German press. My new acquaintances were curious, very keen to know more so as to understand what exactly was happening in that distant land. I could not enlighten them much as regards facts of the contemporary situation. But they were palpably surprised to meet an Indian who did not believe that things were essentially different in his country. They were also surprised at my eagerness to be fully informed about the situation in Germany. It was midnight before we left as friends and comrades with a common purpose.

Thereafter we met frequently and I was invited to secret meetings of communist leaders discussing the current problems of the revolution. I was immensely benefited by the experience, and before long could participate in the discussions. Thalheimer took great pains to give me the English rendering of the discussions, and asked for my opinion, which he translated into German. He was the leader of the party. Paul Levi was still in prison, and Brandler away in Saxony. His attitude naturally won for me a place amongst the leaders of the Communist Party. They all treated me with kindness, affection and respect.

Left Communism

THE Social Democratic government did not dare sign the Versailles Treaty until the General Staff of the defeated army advised it to do so. It was clear that the High Command of the army disapproved of the play of the younger officers to seek an alliance with Russia with the object of continuing the war. The conclusion of the Versailles Treaty, for the time being, scotched National Bolshevism as far as the ultra-nationalist youth was concerned. Two years later, it again flared up when nationalist youth joined hands with communist workers to resist with large-scale sabotage the French army occupying the industrial Ruhr Valley.

In the Third World Congress of the Communist International, Radek delivered an impassioned speech eulogising Schlageter, the leader of the sabotage movement, who had just been executed by the French. He described the representative of ultra-nationalism as the embodiment of the revolutionary plan of the German people rising in revolt against the Versailles Treaty, which had reduced their Fatherland into a colony of *Entente* Imperialism. Radek spoke in behalf of the Russian Communist Party, and the Congress applauded his speech, which was prominently featured in the communist press throughout the world. I wrote an article in the *Pravda* extolling the revolutionary role of anti-imperialist nationalism. My Schlageter article was also prominently published in the world communist press. That article and some knowledge of my earlier political views and activities made me very popular with the ultra-nationalist German youth.

Inside the Communist Party of Germany, National-Bolshevism was expounded by Heinrich Laufenberg and

Fritz Wolfheim, both old members of the Social Democratic Party. Disgusted with the policy of the party leaders during the war and after the defeat and fall of the old regime, they joined the Communists. But in the revolutionary crisis of 1918 and throughout the following period of civil war, the policy of the Spartakus League was also weak and vacillating. Luxemburg thought that the time for the proletariat to capture power in Germany had not yet come. Moreover, she was decidedly opposed to the Bolshevik programme of armed insurrection. She believed that, in the course of time, the proletariat would revolt against the treacherous reformism of the Social Democratic leaders and transfer their powerful support to the Communist Party, and then the time would come for the latter to take over power constitutionally. Until the Second World Congress, the Communist International was to a considerable extent influenced by Luxemburg's opinion.

National-Bolshevism, therefore, appealed to the militant membership as an alternative to what was believed to be a Social Democratic tradition. Laufenberg and Wolfstein gained a considerable following inside the party. Wilhelm Pieck and Paul Levi were then the leaders of the party; they expelled the exponents of National-Bolshevism on the eve of the Second Party Conference at Heidelberg in October 1919. The mantle of Luxemburg had fallen on Levi's narrow shoulders. Of all the Spartakist leaders, he was the most intimately associated with her, and fully shared all her opinions. Being very closely associated with Radek at the same time, he must have also shared the latter's attitude to National-Bolshevism. Laufenberg and Wolfstein had seen Radek in prison and obtained his sanction for the plan to ally with the ultra-nationalist movement in a revolutionary struggle, which would ultimately establish proletarian dictatorship. Levi expelled them from the party, because National-Bolshevism meant negation of his strategy of capturing power constitutionally. In the Heidelberg Party Conference, National-Bolshevism appeared as Left Communism. A majority of the delegates rejected the policy advocated by Levi and Pieck as reformism. They split away from the party and formed the Communist Workers' Party, committed to the Bolshevik programme of armed insurrection to capture power.

When I reached there, Borodin was away from Berlin to attend the Heidelberg Conference, which was held in secret. He told me what had happened there. I also learned that Herman Gorter of Holland was the theoretical leader of the Left Communism, which Lenin criticised as "an infantile malady" in a pamphlet published on the eve of the Second World Congress. Meanwhile, the civil war in Germany intensified and counter-revolution received a setback in the bloodless battle of Berlin in March 1920. The organisers of the Ruhr "Red Army" were members of the Communist Workers' Party. My sympathy was for Left Communism, and I wanted to meet Gorter. Himself a writer of repute, he belonged to a small group of Dutch Marxists who were held in high esteem in the earlier years of the history of the Communist International. Other members of the group were Henriette Roland-Holst, Anton Pannekoek, J. Rutgers and H. Sneevliet. I could not go to Holland immediately, but before long met Sneevliet, who came to Berlin on his way to Moscow as a delegate to the Second World Congress of the Communist International. Rutgers also came to Berlin to see me on Sneevliet's suggestion. I met Roland-Holst in Moscow at the Second World Congress. Pannekoek and Gorter I met only in 1922, when I went to Holland.

Henriette Ronald-Holst acquired fame as a poetess before the First World War. There was a talk of her getting the Nobel Prize. But her poems, originally written in Dutch, and some even in Flemish, were never translated in any main European language. So her fame as a poetess remained very largely confined to her native land. Herself belonging to an aristocratic family, she married a Flemish nobleman who did not share her political ideas. She was a delegate to the Second World Congress of the Communist International, but did not take any part in its discussions. Through our common friends, Rutgers and Sneevliet, I came to know her personally very well. Her adhesion to the cause of social revolution was primarily emotional, although she did not lack an intellectual appreciation of Communism also. But she would feel much more at home with the pre-Marxist Utopians. As a Left Communist, she disapproved of Lenin's New Economic Policy,

and returned from Moscow rather disillusioned. Thereafter, she retired to her country home on the Flemish border. I spent a few days there in 1922, and made the acquaintance of her husband. He was an interesting character, not hostile to Socialism or Communism, but indifferent. He worked on the farm together with other labourers, and often spent the evenings in a nearby pub with some of them, instead of coming home for dinner. The relation between the two was rather Platonic than conjugal, although both were quite happy. They had no children. Like many emotional Communists, she supported Trotzky against Stalin, and was expelled from the party. Thereafter, she completely withdrew from politics, and ultimately joined the Catholic Church as a devout Christian.

Anton Pannekoek was an astronomer of European reputation. He was never politically active, being interested only in the philosophical aspect of Marxism. He lived like a recluse at the Hilversum Observatory, where I visited him whenever I went to Holland. Gorter was a particular friend of Pannekoek, who evidently thought that Left Communism, condemned by Lenin, was more consistent with Marxism than the revolutionary opportunism of the Bolsheviks.

Rutgers was an engineer. He joined the colonial service and spent some years in Indonesia early in the century. Shocked by the consequences of colonial exploitation, he returned home and joined the Socialist Party. On his suggestion, the latter turned to the task of organising the colonial labour, and sent Sneevliet out to Indonesia. Rutgers came in contact with the Russian Bolsheviks in Switzerland before the revolution. Soon after the Bolsheviks had captured power, he went to Russia to help the reconstruction of the country. But during the years of War, Communism and civil war, little work of construction could be undertaken. After the First World Congress, Rutgers returned to Holland entrusted with the task of setting up the West-European Bureau of the Communist International. Roland-Holst and David Wijnkoop, a member of the Dutch Parliament, joined the Bureau.

Rutgers was keenly concerned with the revolutionary movement in the colonies and saw me in Berlin to discuss how the

Communist International could help the liberation of the subject peoples. He urged that I must insist on the question of the liberation of the subject nationalities being given prominence on the agenda of the Second World Congress. Sneevliet, who had recently been to Indonesia, would be a delegate to the Congress; but the initiative must be taken by me. Rutgers himself did not attend the Congress. He returned to Moscow in 1921, and was the first engineer to point out the vast industrial potentialities of Siberia. After a tour of inspection, he submitted the plan of developing an industrial colony in Kurbas, where coal and iron lay side by side, miles long coal seams bursting out on the surface of the earth. The plan was to develop a new industrial centre exclusively with foreign engineers and mechanics recruited from the communist movement in different countries. Rutgers went abroad to recruit personally the first batch to do the spade-work. Three Indian students, who had studied engineering in Germany, but were doubtful about getting suitable employment at home, joined Rutgers' pioneering army, which began the industrial development of Siberia.

Sneevliet was the most colourful and ardent member of the small group of Dutch Left Communists. He was the first to bring the message of Socialism to Asia. He went out to Java in 1913 as Secretary of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce. That was a disguise. Before long, he gathered a small group of youngmen and trained them to organise a trade-union movement and a Socialist Party. He was arrested and tried on the charge of conspiring to subvert the Dutch authority. He pleaded guilty and personally argued his case. His speech in the Court was a scathing condemnation of colonialism and a vindication of the right of the subject people to rise in revolt against Dutch Imperialism. He was convicted; but the punishment was only externment from the colony. Any more severe punishment was precluded by the consideration for the prestige of the white man. It would be such a scandal to put him in prison with native criminals!!

During the war, he carried on Socialist propaganda amongst the Indonesian students in Holland and built up a trained cadre to return home and take up the work of organisation.

He wanted to go out to India and set up there a centre of revolutionary activity throughout the East. He was waiting until the Second World Congress of the Communist International with the hope that he might return to the East as the representative of an international organisation. He met me in Berlin to discuss his plan and to secure my approval and co-operation. I was deeply impressed by his palpably sincere enthusiasm. It was so very much like the evangelical zeal of the Christian missionaries. We became close friends, and did not allow the personal relation to be affected by our subsequent political differences. Through him, I came to know many leaders of the Indonesian revolutionary movement, such as Samaoen, Sudarshana, Tan Malaka, Alimin, Hatta, Sjahrir, to mention only the best-known few. They were mostly students in Dutch Universities; some were revolutionary exiles. From time to time, I went to Holland to lecture in study circles organised by Sneeveliet. The Communists amongst them looked upon me as their teacher, and most were Communists.

Eventually, Sneeveliet left the Communist International and became an important lieutenant of Trotzky. During the Nazi occupation of Holland, he was taken prisoner and shot dead.

When I met him first in Berlin, Sneeveliet, together with his friend Gorter, was closely associated with the newly formed Communist Workers' Party of Germany. Through him, I contacted some leaders of the new party. They were mostly young people who had not inherited the tradition of the Spartakus League. They respected the memory of the martyred Luxemburg, but disapproved of her opposition to Bolshevism. They were bitterly against Paul Levi, who was, in their opinion, not a revolutionary, but a reformist parliamentarian; on the strength of his friendship with Luxemburg, he was ruining the young Communist Party. But their main complaint was that Levi had inherited Luxemburg's antipathy for the Russian Bolsheviks, particularly Lenin. They further alleged that Levi attached much greater importance to the reformist Independent Social Democratic Party than to the revolutionary mass movement, and had driven the Bolshevik left

wing out of the Communist Party to secure the affiliation of the Independent Social Democratic Party with the Communist International. They claimed that a large majority of the Communist Party in Berlin, Hamburg and the industrial Rhineland had joined the new party.

Until early 1920, there, indeed, was no properly organised Communist Party outside Russia. Although the working class movement throughout Europe as a whole sympathised with the new regime in Russia, only small left-wing groups would endorse the Bolshevik programme. Even the Spartakus League was a loosely organised propagandist group. It was madness to talk of organising insurrection and capturing power, following in the footsteps of the Russian Bolsheviks before Communist parties won the support of the masses. To build up the Communist parties as mass organisations was the immediate task. The masses of workers were still organised in trade-unions controlled by the Socialists. The difficulty of weaning them away from the reformist tradition encouraged National-Bolshevism among the younger leaders of the Communist Party. They thought that in alliance with the ultra-nationalist youth, who had contacts in the army, it would be easier to capture power. The alliance did not materialise, but the impatience of the younger elements was there to provide the foundation for the theory and practice of Left Communism. It was a token of the immaturity of Communism, "an infantile malady," as Lenin characterised it. But for the moment, the organisers of the Communist International could not alienate the Left-Communists, Anarchists and Syndicalists who, at that time, were the most enthusiastic supporters of the Russian Revolution and were eager to emulate its example in their respective countries.

Thalheimer and Ernst Meyer were inclined to take this view; but the final judgment was suspended until Levi came out of prison. The Independent Social Democratic Party, which in those days commanded the largest mass support, was considering the proposal to send a delegation to the Second World Congress of the Communist International. Levi was in charge of the negotiations. Nothing should be done to queer his pitch. I was not at all impressed by the would-be

Lenin of Germany. He was undoubtedly a very intelligent man, a clever lawyer and a skilful parliamentarian. He argued his case well, with a degree of overbearance; but whenever opposed, he tended to be hysterical. He vehemently rejected the idea of any reconciliation with the Left Communists, whom he branded as "hair-brained adventurers." When I pointed out that, if the Communist Workers' Party sent a delegation to the World Congress, none could stop it, Levi flared up; he would not allow the delegation to be admitted. The matter was left at that, to be settled in Moscow.

Levi's performance at the Second World Congress was disappointing. He quarrelled practically with everybody. Before long, the blazing intellectual was replaced by the workingman Brandler as the leader of the German Communist Party. Frustrated and embittered, Levi returned to the Social Democratic Party. There also he was not trusted for his past record. In 1929, he committed suicide by jumping out of the window of his Berlin residence on the fourth floor of a building.

Indian independence. The Germans utilised it for propaganda purposes. Some of its members were sent to Turkey with the mission of carrying on propaganda to incite the Indian troops in Mesopotamia to revolt against the British. There was singularly little response to the inflammatory appeal. The failure was due not so much to the loyalty of the Indian troops as to the ineffectiveness of the propaganda. In any case, there was no mutiny of Indian soldiers, and the number of those taken prisoner was not large enough to compose an army of liberation. Presumably, neither the Turks nor the Germans were interested in such a plan, if there was any, because of its evident futility. No such army could ever reach anywhere near the Indian borders. Doomed to isolation and inaction by the circumstances of its very composition and existence, the Committee before long was disintegrated by internal feuds fed with the jealousy amongst its leading members.

Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, a brother of Sarojini Naidu, was the live-wire. As a student in England, he had been a member of the terrorist group to which Savarkar also belonged. After the latter's arrest and deportation to India as a sequel to the senseless assassination of Curzon Wylie, Chattopadhyaya found asylum in France, where he associated with Mme. Cama and Krishnaverma, who carried on anti-British propaganda there. On the outbreak of the War, Chattopadhyaya moved to Berlin either on his own initiative or on the invitation of the Germans. Mme. Cama and Krishnaverma called themselves Socialists. They did not follow Chattopadhyaya to the compromising alliance with Prussian militarism as against British Imperialism. As professed Socialists, they had attended international Congresses which denounced militarism and passed anti-war resolutions. I met Mme. Cama in Paris in 1924. The lovable old lady was still an anti-British fire-brand; but there was little of Socialism in her ideas. Krishnaverma had died in the meantime.

When the War broke out, there were a few Indians studying in German Universities. As British subjects, they were enemy aliens and should have been interned as such. Chattopadhyaya approached them with the tempting offer that they could escape internment by joining him. A further inducement was

the grant of doctorate degrees before they had finished their studies. The original Indian Revolutionary Committee was thus set up; One Mohammad Mansoor, who had gone to Germany to study philology on an Indian Government scholarship, was elected the President. Because of the alliance with Turkey, the Germans were inclined to give prominence to Muslims in their relation with India.

Dr. Mansoor spent some time in Turkey during the war. But eventually he was pushed to the background, when Indian revolutionary exiles from America came over to join the Berlin Committee. I did not know where he was when I came to Berlin. After a couple of years, he turned up in Moscow with his German wife, and called himself a Communist. His former colleagues of the Berlin Committee suspected him of British espionage, though there was little evidence to substantiate the charge. Nevertheless, he was not trusted in Moscow. Moreover, I could not make out why he came there, and left him to his wits. Several months later his wife came to inform me that he had been arrested, and she was not allowed to see him. Naturally, in distress, she appealed for my intervention. In those days, nothing could be more terrible in Russia than to be suspected of espionage. Even Lenin could not save one from the fatal consequences of being arrested on that charge. The *Cheka* (the Extraordinary Commission to fight counter-revolution) was all-powerful like the Committee of Public Security at the time of the French Revolution. It was the instrument of Red Terror, and it functioned relentlessly. However, I did intervene and obtained the permission for Dr. Mansoor to leave Russia. He was not allowed even to see me before his departure under guard. Thereafter, he lived in Germany until 1930, and did not seem to have been any too thankful to me for having snatched him from the jaws of death — the inescapable fate of one arrested for espionage during the period of Red Terror in Russia.

He returned to India in December 1930, and was arrested June next year. During my trial in the Kanpur Jail, Mansoor appeared as a prosecution witness to identify me as the "M. N. Roy" whom he had met in Moscow. He had returned to India a few months before and had been

appointed professor in the Aligarh University. Dame Rumour wagged her tongue to insinuate that the permission to return to India and the appointment were Dr. Mansoor's reward for services rendered. It may or may not have been the case. There was no evidence to judge one way or the other, except that identification of the man on trial as "M. N. Roy" was the crucial point of the case against me. Dr. Mansoor died while I was still in prison. One must not speak ill of the dead. He must be given the benefit of doubt.

Early in 1915, the German Foreign Office decided to send a mission to Afghanistan with the object of detaching that country from British influence and establishing there a centre of propaganda to incite trouble in India. The plan was to set up at Kabul the so-called Provisional Government of Independent India, which would call upon the Indian people to revolt against the British rule. German oriental experts thought that, in order to be representative, the Provisional Government of India should be headed by a member of the princely order. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya's resourcefulness produced one. Raja Mahendra Pratap of Hathras, U.P. was stranded in Switzerland. Before the war broke out, he had left India for a tour of Europe. He agreed to come to Berlin, provided that he would be received in audience by the Kaiser. With the consent of the Indian Section of the German Foreign Office, Chattopadhyaya accepted Mahendra Pratap's terms, and the latter came to Berlin to be elected chairman of the Indian Revolutionary Committee. The coveted and promised interview with the Kaiser did not materialise; the pretext was that the Supreme War Lord was away at the front directing operations. The President-designate of the Provisional Government of Independent India was, however, awarded a consolation prize; he was received in audience by the Crown Prince.

The Indo-German mission travelling through Persia reached Kabul. It was headed by Baron von Hentig of the German Foreign Office. In the meantime, Amanullah had disposed of his pro-British father and ascended the Afghan throne. He welcomed the German mission and allowed the establishment of the Provisional Government of Independent India with Raja Mahendra Pratap as its President and Maulana

he was by far the superior, but eccentric in emotion and erratic politically. From an orthodox Hindu he became an anarchist — a close associate of Alexander Barkman and Emma Goldman in the United States. But anti-British nationalism was still the dominating passion. Therefore, Hardyal went over to Berlin to join the Indian Revolutionary Committee there. Before long, he clashed with Chattopadhyaya who, backed by the Germans, bossed the show. The scope of anti-British activity could easily transcend the direct promotion of the cause of Indian freedom. Chattopadhyaya was a restless soul of indomitable energy and adventurous temperament. He travelled secretly in the neutral countries of Europe, and seems to have rendered valuable assistance to the German Secret Service, which won for him the predominant position amongst the Indians in Berlin. Consequently, he easily got the upper hand in the struggle for leadership with Hardyal, who was arrested and interned as an enemy alien. On the defeat of Germany, he escaped to Sweden and wrote a sensational book in which he narrated his experiences in Berlin.

The more significant part of the book was a passionate declaration of loyalty to Britain. One can only guess whether it was yet another proof of Hardyal's political instability or a sober judgment informed by experience. In any case, it required a good deal of moral courage for one who had won legendary popularity as an uncompromising revolutionary nationalist. The moral courage cost Hardyal his popularity and he spent the remaining years of his life in political retirement as a professor in the Upsala University. I never met him; but from whatever is known about his life, one can come to the conclusion that his was a remarkable personality. He was a misfit in politics; but when at last he found the profession congenial to his character, premature death put an end to his life. Perhaps that was a blessing in disguise. Successful nationalism is not particularly grateful to its heroic and martyred pioneers who today live in obscurity as embittered old men.

Champakraman Pillai was the most colourful member of the Berlin Indian Revolutionary Committee. I did not meet him when I first came to Berlin. Later, in 1922, I found him keeping a shop of oriental antiquities. As an orphan

movement, he had been arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in 1907. On his release, he left India either to escape fresh prosecution or to seek celebrity in the United States, which his more famous brother was believed to have conquered for Indian spiritualism. However, he lived there a rather uneventful life until the outbreak of the First World War, when he went to Berlin to join the Indian Revolutionary Committee. As a youngster at home, I had admired him as a martyred national hero. Years of mysterious revolutionary activities abroad had added to the original glamour. But the man I met in Berlin early in 1920 was disappointing—a sort of Rip van Winkle, who was still enjoying his blissful slumber. He received me in his shabby lodging with a degree of pomposity and admonition. He was the only member of the august Revolutionary Committee present in Berlin, and in that capacity demanded a full report of my activities ever since I left India. The emphasis was on the large amount of money I had received from agents of the German Government in various places. It must be accounted for. Not wanting to annoy him, I promised to do all that in the course of time, and tried to raise our conversation on the political level. He was quite indifferent to what was happening in Germany and to all the talk of class struggle. Nor did he believe that the Bolshevik regime in Russia would last long. Therefore, he ridiculed my desire to go there, and would not think of his ever doing so. He did go after a year, with other Indian nationalists, to come back disappointed. However, I managed to placate the superannuated hero by promising the report he demanded. Meanwhile, a good meal in a better-class restaurant was enough to cheer him up; then gossip and anecdotes about the past created an atmosphere of intimacy.

Thereupon, I told him a little about experience with the Germans and other Indian revolutionaries in Mexico, and also of Borodin's mission and the money I spent in that connection. He strongly disapproved of my having used the Indian revolutionary funds for an irrelevant purpose, and would not be impressed by the argument that the requirements of an actual revolution should have priority. However, he could feel that there was no sanction for the defunct Berlin Committee to

An Embarrassing Associate

BORODIN informed me that the plan of our early journey to Moscow had miscarried. It was to hire an aeroplane with the help of some German military officer with National-Bolshevik inclinations. The overland route through Poland was blocked by the newly established Pilsudsky regime, which was waging against Soviet Russia a war of intervention. The Polish army, equipped by the *Entente* Powers and directly under the command of the French General Weygand, had marched into the Ukraine and set up a counter-revolutionary separatist government there. The sea route to Leningrad was also closed because the northern Baltic and the Gulf of Finland were still icebound. Moreover, except a few Swedish ones, no foreign ships were yet going to any Russian port. Stockholm was the only western window, so to say, of beleaguered Bolshevik Russia. But it was not easy for many to slip through that way, which was legally open exclusively to the holders of diplomatic passports.

Under the circumstances, it appeared that I must wait indefinitely in Berlin. It was a depressing perspective, and I was annoyed when Borodin said that, although the plan of our journey had miscarried, he was leaving immediately on order from Moscow. He was unhappy, but not, as I came to know later, for leaving me behind; it was for a more serious reason. For the failure of his mission to the New World, he was under suspicion. The inquisitors in Moscow did not want to take the chance of his escaping their revolutionary justice. Provided with the passport of a diplomatic courier, he travelled through Sweden practically under escort. Guralsky took his place as responsible for arranging my trip to Moscow.

But I was not the only one so stranded. Delegates to the Second World Congress were reaching Berlin from all directions. They had also to be despatched to Moscow. Many of them travelled illegally under various disguises and with diverse devices. The general plan was for them all to reach Holland somehow and there report themselves to the West European Bureau of the International. The latter then smuggled them across the frontier to Germany. Quite unexpectedly, an Indian delegate arrived in Berlin that way. It was a surprise for me; but a pleasant surprise. He came with a letter from Rutgers who introduced him as Dr. Shaheer. He had reached Holland from the Dutch Indies with introduction from common friends there. In reply to my enquiry, the newcomer told the following story about himself.

His real name was Abani Mukherji. Before the war, he had gone to Germany for study, and managed to leave the country as soon as hostilities broke out. Travelling through the United States, he reached Japan in 1916 and waited there until the middle of the next year when, with the help of Rash Behari Bose, he got a chance to proceed homewards together with Shiva Prasad Gupta of Benares. According to Mukherji's story, Gupta had come to Japan in response to a call from Rash Behari and was returning home with an important message and money for secret revolutionary activities. Both were arrested and detained at Singapore. Before long, Gupta was released and allowed to proceed to India. After days and days of gruelling cross-examination and some occasional physical torture, the police were convinced that Mukherji was not connected with the revolutionary movement. Thereafter he was granted leave to go walking on the beach near the fort. Availing of the relative freedom, he managed to escape in a fishing boat to a Chinese junk which took him over to Java. There he changed his name to Dr. Shaheer in order to pass as a Malay and contacted some revolutionaries who had heard of the Russian Revolution and been influenced by the message of Communism. It appealed to Mukherji also, to the extent of inducing him to abandon the idea of returning home, and start on an adventurous journey to the land of revolution. Employed as a steward on a Dutch ship,

he reached Holland and saw Rutgers with the letter of introduction from common friends in Java.

The story was hardly convincing. There were gaps which could not be easily filled up. Yet, he was the first Indian Communist I met. The temptation to trust him was strong. Perhaps in excitement, he did not tell his story coherently. He was a man bubbling with enthusiasm, though probably naive — of the type who would draw upon imagination, to the extent of departing from the truth for dramatising his adventures, and he might do so without any evil motive. Most probably, being satisfied that he had nothing to do with the revolutionary movement, the police set him free. But he was afraid of returning to India, where he was sure to be suspected of betrayal for having been released, and consequently in the danger of being punished by the revolutionary party. Others similarly suspected were assassinated; revolutionary justice was relentless. Instead of running that great risk, Mukherji must have crossed over to Java, and from there found his way to Europe. While in Java, he could easily make the acquaintance of people who helped him.

However, I thought that it might be useful to give him a chance to prove that he was better than his story. A little conversation revealed that his Communism consisted in a burning desire to go to Moscow. I put that down to curiosity or perhaps the spirit of adventure. But at the same time, I had no hesitation to resolve that he should not be allowed to proceed to Moscow before his *bona fides* were established. In any case, how could he go? I could not claim for him priority of passage, when so many invited delegates were waiting for their chance. Therefore I advised Dr. Shaheer to go back to Holland to wait there for instructions. If he wanted to serve the cause of Communism and believed that it should be introduced in India, he should return there at the earliest opportunity. The problematical journey to Moscow would prejudice the chance of his doing so. If he desired to learn and equip himself for organizing the Communist movement in India, our friends in Holland would be very helpful. My intention was to re-establish contact with India, so as to reinvigorate the revolutionary movement with new ideas and

ideals. The Second World Congress of the Communist International was going to adopt a programme to help the struggle of the colonial peoples for national liberation. The message must reach India as soon as possible. Dr. Shaheer could be the messenger, provided that, in the meantime, more about his past was known, so as to inspire confidence. He was very disappointed and stayed on in Berlin until I left for Moscow.

To my great surprise, Dr. Shaheer turned up in Moscow on the eve of the Second World Congress as a delegate from India certified as such by the West European Bureau of the Communist International. He brought for me a letter from Rutgers who wrote that Dr. Shaheer was extremely eager, and the Bureau did not think it would be wise to disappoint him; however, a larger number of delegates from Asia would enhance the international character of the Congress. As I was a delegate from Mexico, he was admitted as the sole Indian delegate; together with others of a similar status, individuals not representing any organizations, he was entitled to participate fully in all discussions, but not to vote. He thought that it was a "discrimination against colonial people" and went about busily canvassing support of the different delegations for his demand for equality with others.

For me it was an embarrassing situation; none knew that the obstreperous Indian delegate was acting on his own initiative, and I could not stop him making a nuisance of himself, even if I tried. Actually, I did try, but failed. Dr. Shaheer was undaunted and indefatigable. A corpulent man with a dark complexion, a round head and bloodshot protruding eyes, he was called the "Indian steam-roller." His next demand was for Indian representation on each and every committee. That demand was granted, but the choice fell on me. Formally, I was a delegate from Mexico; but everybody knew that I was "the wise man from the East," who had come from the New World on Lenin's special invitation. Nevertheless, Dr. Shaheer's second demand to vindicate the honour of India was also embarrassing for me. It would be quite natural for all to think that Dr. Shaheer was acting as my tout. However, the embarrassment caused by his initial

naive pomposity was nothing compared to what came soon afterwards.

The Commission on the National and Colonial Question of the Second World Congress was in session under Lenin's chairmanship. One of the Secretaries of the Congress tiptoed up to him and whispered something in his ear. He was annoyed at the intrusion and waived the man away. But the latter presently re-entered the hall, closed the door gently behind himself and stood there apologetically, waiting until he caught Lenin's eye. Instantly, the door behind opened just a little to let through a head which nodded at Lenin. This time, looking not annoyed but rather serious, he got up, asked the Dutch delegate Marring to take the chair, and briskly walked out. After a while, the Secretary came to me and whispered that Lenin wanted me in the next room for a minute. I went out to find him talking in a very low voice to a tall, lanky man with an extremely ugly face. He was introduced to me as Com. Peter, a Vice-President of the *Cheka*, as the instrument of the Red Terror was called. The name was familiar; "Bloody Peter," as he was mentioned in whispers, was Terror itself.

Lenin turned towards me and asked what I knew about the Indian Mukherji who was going under the name of Dr. Shaheer. I was taken aback by the suddenness of the question, and briefly recapitulated the story as told to me in Berlin. Did I keep track of his movements in Russia? No. It was suspicious and Peter wanted to arrest him, Lenin blurted out with obvious uneasiness. Peter growled that the man contacted questionable characters as soon as he reached Leningrad and saw them again when he returned there for the ceremonious opening of the Second World Congress. I did not think that there was anything really serious, and promised to find out why Mukherji saw those people. Peter added that in Moscow also Dr. Shaheer was keeping bourgeois company. Lenin intervened to say that it would be awkward to arrest the only Indian delegate to the Congress; the news would leak out. I agreed. Peter reluctantly agreed to leave the man alone, for the time being, on my responsibility, but he would be under surveillance.

On my asking, Mukherji naively admitted that he had seen a couple of aristocratic ladies in Leningrad. Why? Oh, he

fall through. He came to India in 1922, moved about the country seeing a number of people secretly, and returned to Germany after a few months. How he travelled to India and back was his secret. However, he had made some personal friends in the German Communist Party. With their help, he reappeared in Moscow and tried to act as the Indian representative independently of me. I was away from Moscow most of the time, first in Europe, and then in China. But none would take him seriously, even when he went to the incredible extent of insinuating that revolutionaries in India did not trust me. To challenge my representativeness was pointless. I did not claim to represent anybody but myself, and held my position in the International as an individual.

I never knew if the charge against Mukherji had any foundation in fact. I never cared to investigate. The charge and counter-charge of betrayal and espionage is frequent amongst revolutionaries in exile. Indians were no exception. However, Mukherji's own behaviour and inordinate ambition proved to be his ruin. Having failed to acquire, by hook or by crook, a high place in the headquarters of the Communist International, he settled down to a private life in Moscow. The last I heard of him was that he was engaged as a teacher in Leningrad. What happened to him thereafter, I do not know. It is reported that in his last days Chattopadhyaya was also non-politically employed in Leningrad about the same time as Mukherji. It would be a cruel irony of fate if ultimately they both were victimised by revolutionary hysteria. Chattopadhyaya certainly deserved a better fate.

of professional revolutionaries to organise the revolution is a fundamental principle of Leninism. To organise and lead the world revolution the party must be an international body. Such an international organisation to function as the organiser of the World Revolution was founded by the Second Congress of the Communist International, which came to be called the General Staff of the World Revolution. But until the end of 1919, nothing much was done to prepare for the inaugural Congress of the new International.

Having miraculously survived the civil war and foreign intervention, the Bolsheviki were preoccupied with the all-important task of consolidating the new regime in Russia. They had little organisational connection even with the nascent Communist Party of Germany. After the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored. Adolf Joffe came to Berlin as the first Bolshevik Ambassador in a capitalist country. He was accompanied by Bukharin, Rakowsky and Radek. Their object was to establish contact, in the first place, with the revolutionary movement in Germany, and later with that in other European countries. But Bolsheviki dressed in the Russian peasant blouse of coarse linen occupying the lavishly appointed mansion where the Tzar's Ambassadors had lived in luxury, and walking along Unter den Linden, rubbing shoulders with Prussian military officers, could not be long tolerated by the latter's arrogance. As soon as the militarist terror followed the defeat of the German Revolution, the Bolshevik Embassy was accused of doing subversive propaganda and asked to leave Germany. A Pole by birth, Radek had lived most of his life in Germany. He claimed German citizenship and refused to leave the country. Thereupon he was arrested and imprisoned. From his prison cell, he encouraged National-Bolshevism and established contact with high German military officers who toyed with the idea of a Russo-German alliance against the *Entente* Powers.

Meanwhile, the nascent Communist Party of Germany continued to be weak and confused, still without any organisational connection with Moscow. Having rejected Radek's grandiose plan of linking up the revolution in Europe with a

Presently, Schlipkin came in with the "important fellow passenger," a simply but elegantly dressed youngish woman, and introduced her as Madame Sadoul. The assembled officers jumped to their feet to pay homage to the wife of a man who had attained fame as a minor hero of the civil war. Captain Jacques Sadoul was a member of the French Military Mission which went to Russia after the downfall of the old regime to help the Provisional Government reorganise the demoralised and disintegrating army. He went over to the Bolsheviks when they captured power, helped the organisation of the Red Army, and rose to the position of Trotzky's *de facto* Chief of Staff. In France he was court-martialled in contumacy for desertion and sentenced to death. As he could not return to his native land, Madame Sadoul was waiting for the first opportunity to join her husband in Russia.

The voyage on the Southern Baltic was pleasant and uneventful. We were approaching the land of the midnight sun. It never got dark before midnight, and a couple of hours the eastern horizon was aglow with the red light of dawn. The gulf of Finland was still ice-bound. But the Captain proudly informed us that *The Soviet* was a powerful vessel capable of ploughing through several feet deep floating ice-fields. Before long, we could observe her performing the feat. Our first stop was at the Finnish port of Abo at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia. Only a few hours later, the ship reached Helsingfors. Passengers could disembark there, and travel to Leningrad by train. But the route was closed to any Communist. Finland then was under Mannerheim's terror regime, backed by a German army which had refused to disband itself and withdraw as required by the Versailles Treaty. It was midnight when our ship reached Helsingfors; we were all on deck watching the dusk of the evening dispelled by the red glow of the dawn. It was a familiar experience for the Russian crew of the ship. For me it was a legend turning out to be real. Madame Sadoul was terribly excited.

In the morning, the ship ploughed across the ice-field which blocked the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, to reach Reval. Blocks of ice, which looked like huge chunks of glass several feet thick, were turned up on both sides of the ship's

Part 3

In the Holy Land

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First Day in Moscow

It was about noon when the train reached our destination. Lomonosov looked at his watch and declared that it was exactly in time. The railway system of Russia had been very badly dislocated by the civil war. It was years before regular train service was restored, and trains ran according to any time-table. In 1920, the entire railway system was still reserved for military transport. There was no private passenger traffic. None could simply go to a station, buy a ticket and board a train to travel. The Revolution had abolished money; consequently, there was no distinction between the rich and the poor. Only pass-holders could use the railway for travel on official business. In order to get a meal in a restaurant or a pair of boots in a shop or board a tram-car in the city, one must produce the certificate of labour. Public life was governed by the principle of revolutionary social justice: "No work, no bread."

While leading us out of the station, Lomonosov apologised that it would take years to run a regular train service on all the lines, and proudly reminded us that Russia had the second largest railway mileage in the world. But one thing had been already achieved: on the line connecting the two capitals, no less than three trains were run daily, and they all kept the time. He added in a whisper that the second important man of the country travelled three times a week in the train which had brought us. But our privilege did not go to the extent of travelling in the same train with him. No private person was allowed to do so.

I learned later that the awe-struck reference was to Zinoviev, who travelled between the two capitals three times a week because he was President of the Leningrad Soviet, Member

of the all-powerful Political Bureau of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. A man who wore the imposing triple crown (none else had the distinction) was naturally regarded as the most important person next only to Lenin.

The political capital of the Republic had been shifted to Moscow, because Leningrad was exposed to the danger of invasion. A powerful German army was still entrenched in Finland, just across the frontier, only at a distance of a few miles. The White Army of the Tzarist General Yudenitch, backed by the German Baltic Army and encouraged by the *Entente* Powers, had reached the southern suburb of the city in the summer of 1919. Situated deep in the heart of the country, Moscow could not be so threatened. But being traditionally the centre of feudal power and reaction, its social and cultural atmosphere was hardly congenial for the rise of new revolutionary institutions. The mediaeval walled city of the Kremlin was the most incongruous seat for the headquarters of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic.

Leningrad, on the contrary, was a modern city with an industrial periphery which was the social base of the revolution. The revolution began there and spread to the rest of the country. Not only was the Petrograd proletariat the first to capture power, they also defended the new revolutionary government with their lives. Therefore, the Soviet and the Party organisation of Leningrad were given the pride of place in the revolutionary State, and dominated the political life of the Republic. A man who controlled them commanded great prestige and wielded enormous power. In 1920, that man was Zinoviev, and naturally enough he believed himself to be only next to Lenin in the hierarchy of the new regime, and aspired to succeed him as the supreme leader. When I met him a few days after my arrival in Moscow, I could not help wondering whether he possessed the intrinsic greatness to be worthy of the position he occupied. I had no prejudice against him. On the contrary, I shared the general belief that he was Lenin's right-hand man. But history proved that he did not deserve the distinction. Once again, first impressions did not mislead me.

Schlipkin conducted us out of the station. The idea that at last I was in Moscow was so very overwhelming as to make me walk as if in a dream. It was good that the keenness of my perception was for the moment blunted by the elation of having reached the journey's end. Otherwise, I might be disappointed and disillusioned by the experienced reality of disorder, dirt and drabness. A new order could not be built overnight.

The vast open space in front of the station was crowded with men in uniform; rickety carriages pulled by emaciated horses lurched on the cobble stones at the risk of being smashed by motor cars which defied all usual traffic regulations. The recklessness was all the more remarkable because the madly dashing cars were all occupied by military men. I suppose the recklessness demonstrated the feeling of power which, as I lived to learn, bred callousness to other people's lives. I was jolted out of a daze caused by the impact of first impressions, expected and unexpected, when a large black limousine stopped in front of us. The driver was in a soldier's uniform. Lomonosov opened the door for Madame Sadoul to get in. Schlipkin gave him an address and the car moved on. We followed in another with the hood down. In the front seat by the driver sat a grim-faced soldier holding a gun in his hand. The heavy car bounced and rattled as it dashed on the cobbled road at a high speed. The streets looked deserted because all the shop windows were boarded up. Nobody seemed to loiter; all the passers-by looked purposeful.

Presently, we crossed an iron bridge on a rather narrow stream. It was the Moscow River. Driving along the river for a short distance our car swung through the iron gate into the spacious compound of what looked like a large private house. Borodin came out in the portico and led me up the magnificent wooden stair into a suite of rooms which simply took my breath away. It was not a palace; but who lived in the regal comfort and luxury of the gorgeous mansion? Borodin answered my unspoken question. In the old days, it had been the town residence of Count Gutchkov. A nobleman taken to business, he had a large share in the beet sugar industry and was known as the "Sugar King" of Russia. The revolution having abolished private property, the "Gutchkov Mansion"

areas. Moscow with its inflated population was the worst sufferer.

Karakhan was a young man, hardly yet on the wrong side of the thirties, too young for the position he occupied. Formally one of the several Vice-Commissars, he was the *de facto* head of the Foreign Office. Chicherin did nothing without consulting him. And he was the liaison between the Foreign Office and the Communist International. His particular interest, however, was to establish diplomatic relations with Asiatic Governments and use the relation as the medium of Communist propaganda. He was an American by birth, and the finest specimen of Caucasian manhood. Radek's merciless sarcasm once described him as the handsomest ass of the Soviets. He was not stupid but preferred to avoid the limelight of popularity. Therefore very few knew him well. At the same time, his important position made other ambitious young men jealous, who tried to malign him. Perhaps because of his extraordinary good looks, he tended to be rather meticulous about his clothes, and was scornful of the fashionable affectation of dressing shabbily as the token of revolutionary fervour. His jealous detractors called him a bourgeois. No epithet could be more damaging in those days of demonstrative proletarian purity. By birth, Karakhan did not belong to the working class, and he never tried to make a secret of his non-proletarian parentage. Before the revolution, he was a librarian in Petrograd. He seldom went out of his residence except to the office, and then he invariably wore a black coat and a spotless white collar. In retort to the silly charge that he preferred the badge of bourgeois respectability to the proletarian practice of being with the people, Karakhan said that the white collar never kept him away from the barricades, because he did not put it on his ankles. Most probably, there was a good deal of stubbornness in his attitude, although neatness in habit and cleanliness of clothes should be any day preferable to the belief that dirt and slovenliness were the tokens of revolutionary austerity.

After dinner, I accompanied Borodin to his room. He had to continue some very important work. Two days ago, Balabanova had charged him with the task of translating into

English Lenin's latest brochure on Left Communism. The original was in Russian. Already in Berlin I had heard about the sensational publication. There had been some misunderstanding and wrong interpretations, because the German rendering was not quite accurate. The English and French versions must be better. It was not easy for the very best of professional translators to grasp the dialectics of condemning Left Communism and yet not to prejudice the foundation of the Communist International by alienating groups advocating it. A dialectic approach to the problem of Left Communism which, in plain language, meant revolutionary impatience and proletarian puritanism, was the fundamental issue facing the Second World Congress. Lenin's brochure therefore was a piece of communist literature of historic significance. It must be read and understood by all the faithful. In those early days, communist conviction, though very largely emotional, did not exclude attempts at understanding. Lenin's was an appeal to reason as well as to faith. That was dialectic. But he wrote in a very clumsy style, which resulted from the habit of compressing too many ideas in one sentence. The habit was aggravated when one wrote in a hurry as all Bolshevik leaders did in those hectic days. Dictating to stenographers replaced the practice of writing. They made speeches either on the platform or while dictating an article or a book to the stenographer. Some of them, Radek for example, used to walk up and down while dictating. In the hectic atmosphere of the early days of the revolution, Lenin's style became more involved and declamatory, although he retained the practice of writing. For that conservative habit, Radek taunted that the old man never learned to dictate a letter.

Borodin was wrestling with the title of the brochure. The literal translation would be "The Infantile Sickness of Left Communism"; but the faithful rendering would miss the dialectics of the content. Because it conveyed the impression that Left Communism was roundly condemned in the book. I suggested the appositional form, which was approved by Lenin and adopted in all subsequent translations.

It struck ten and Borodin remembered my appointment with Karakhan. I felt it was too late, and wondered why